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THE MUSLIM ATTRIBUTES AND THE CHRISTIAN TRINITY *

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ALREADY in the first part of the eighth century, as one may judge from the reports of teachings to which Wāṣil (d. 748) was opposed,¹ there arose in Islam the belief that certain terms which are attributed to God in the Koran stand for real incorporeal beings which exist in God from eternity. There is nothing in the Koran to warrant such a belief. Nor is there any warrant that at that early stage in the history of Islam the belief originated spontaneously by that kind of reasoning by which later Muslim theologians tried to defend it against opposition. The appearance of that belief at that time can be explained only on the ground of some external influence. Such an external influence could be either Greek philosophy or Judaism or Christianity. Greek philosophy is to be eliminated, for we have the testimony of Shahrastānī that it was not until later, among the followers of Wāṣil, that the problem of attributes came under the influence of Greek philosophy.² And so also must Judaism be eliminated, for the kind of Judaism with which Islam was in direct contact at that time contained nothing in its teachings which could have inspired that new belief. By a process of elimination it is to be assumed that Christianity was that external influence.

A suggestion as to the Christian origin of the belief in the reality of divine attributes is to be found in the discussion of that problem in the literature of the time when the problem was still a vital issue. The belief in the reality of divine attributes was

* This is a chapter in a book entitled *The Philosophy of the Kalam*, which was completed in 1947 and is now being prepared for the press.

¹ Shahrastānī, *al-Milal wal-Niḥal*, p. 31, ll. 17 ff. (ed. Cureton).

² *Ibid.*, p. 31, ll. 19 ff. Cf. M. Horten, *Die philosophischen Systeme der spekulativen Theologen im Islam* (1912), p. 133.

characterized by those who were opposed to it as being analogous to the Christian doctrine of the Trinity. Abulfaraj, also known as Bar Hebraeus, speaking of the Mu'tazilites, who denied the reality of divine attributes, says that thereby they steered clear of "the persons (*aqānīm*) of the Christians,"³ the implication being that the belief in the reality of divine attributes indirectly steers one into the belief of the Christian Trinity. 'Aḍad al-Dīn al-Ījī similarly reports that the Mu'tazilites accused those who believed in the reality of divine attributes of having fallen into the error of the Christian belief in the Trinity.⁴ And prior to both of them, among the Jews, David al-Muqammaṣ,⁵ Saadia,⁶ Joseph al-Bāṣir,⁷ and Maimonides,⁸ evidently reflecting still earlier Muslim sources, whenever they happen to mention the Muslim doctrine of the reality of divine attributes, compare it to the Christian doctrine of the Trinity. It is thus in the Christian doctrine of the Trinity that we must look for the origin of the Muslim doctrine of divine attributes.

But the words of opponents cannot always be taken at their face value, for opponents, especially in matters of religion, are in the habit of accusing one another of things which are not necessarily so. If we are to assume, on the basis of what its opponents said about it, that the Muslim doctrine of attributes had its origin in the Christian doctrine of the Trinity, we shall have to find some external evidence in support of that assumption. We shall especially have to find some logical reason, or at least some psychological motive, to explain how the Muslims, who had started with an outspoken negation of the Christian Trinity on the ground of its incompatibility with the unity of God, happened to substitute for it a doctrine which involved the very same difficulty contained in

³ Cf. E. Pocock, *Specimen Historiae Arabum sive Gregorii Abul Farajii Malatensis de Origine et Moribus Arabum* (1650), p. 19, l. 12, referred to by S. Munk in his French translation of Maimonides' *Dalālat al-Ḥā'irīn*, *Le Guide des Égarés*, I, p. 180, n.1.

⁴ *Ibid.*, quoted from al-Ījī's *al-Mawāqif fī 'Ilm al-Kalām*; referred to in Munk, *op. cit.*, p. 181, n.1.

⁵ Quoted from his *'Isḥrūn Maqālāt in Judah ben Barzillai' Perush Sefer Yeṣirah*, p. 79.

⁶ *al-Amānāt wal-I'tiqādāt* II, p. 86, ll. 2 ff.

⁷ Cf. P. F. Frankl, *Ein Mu'tazilitischen Kalam aus dem 10ten Jahrhundert* (1872), pp. 15 and 28.

⁸ *Dalālat al-Ḥā'irīn*, I, 50.

the doctrine of the Trinity. To say that they did it only as an imitation of the Christian doctrine would not be sufficient. Imitation could be used as an explanation in a case when some peculiarly Christian belief, the like of which existed also in Islam or which at least was not directly rejected by Islam, happened to find its way into Islam. It cannot be used as an explanation in the present case, when nothing resembling the doctrine of the Trinity existed in Islam and, moreover, when that doctrine itself was openly rejected.

Starting therefore with the assumption that the Muslim doctrine of attributes might have originated in the Christian doctrine of the Trinity, we shall try to find first some external evidence for that assumption and then some logical explanation for the transition from the Christian doctrine of the Trinity to the Muslim doctrine of attributes.

We shall take up first the evidence of terminology.

From the very beginning of the history of the problem of divine attributes in Islam two Arabic terms are used for what we call attribute, namely, (1) *ma'na* and (2) *ṣifah*. Thus in the report of the earliest occurrence of the problem, it is said that Wāṣil maintained, in opposition to those who believed in the reality of attributes, that "he who posits an eternal *ma'na* and *ṣifah* posits two gods."⁹ Now if there is any truth in the a priori assumption that the doctrine of attributes originated in the doctrine of the Trinity, we should have a right to expect that these two fundamental terms used in the doctrine of attributes would reflect similar fundamental terms in the doctrine of the Trinity, terms which were perhaps used haphazardly by Arabic speaking Christians in their discussions with Muslims and perhaps not the best chosen terms, but still terms which can be traced to corresponding Greek terms of good usage in the formulation of the doctrine of the Trinity.

The Arabic term *ma'na*, whatever philosophical meanings it may have acquired later,¹⁰ originally must have meant simply "thing," as is evidenced by the fact that it is used by Ishāq Ibn

⁹ Shahrastānī, p. 31, l. 19.

¹⁰ Here are examples of translations of the term *ma'na* in the passage of Wāṣil quoted above: Haarbrücker, in his translation of Shahrastānī, I, p. 45 (1850):

Ḥunain (d. ca. 910) as a translation of the Greek term *πράγμα*.¹¹ It is, therefore, quite reasonable to assume that it is in this simple meaning, and not in any of its later philosophic meanings, that the term was used in that passage of Wāṣil in the early part of the eighth century when Arabic words had not as yet acquired philosophic meanings. It happens that in Christianity, among the several terms by which the three members of the Trinity are described, such, for instance, as hypostases (*ὑποστάσεις*, *subsistentiae*), persons (*πρόσωπα*, *personae*), and substances (*οὐσίαι*, *substantiae*), there is also the term "things" (*πράγματα*, *res*). The two Fathers of the Church, one writing in Greek and the other in Latin, who for the first time tried to formulate the doctrine of the Trinity in philosophic language, in their search for a proper terminology, made use of the term "things" for what we usually refer to as "persons" or "hypostases." Thus Origen describes the Father and Son as "two things (*πράγματα*) in hypostases"¹² and Tertullian argues that the Word is not "a voice and sound of the mouth" but rather a "thing (*res*) and a person,"¹³ whence he describes each of the three persons as a "substantive thing" (*res substantiva*).¹⁴ Though the term *pragma* did not succeed in establishing itself as a technical term for the members of the Trinity, still its use did not completely disappear. It occurs in the *Formula Prolixa* of the Council of Antioch in 343 as the equivalent of the term *prosopon*;¹⁵ it is used by Basil in several passages in place of the term *hypostasis*;¹⁶ and it is treated as an equivalent of hypostasis by Cyril of Alexandria.¹⁷ But what is especially of im-

"Begriff"; Horten in his *Die philosophischen Systeme der spekulativen Theologen im Islam*, p. 132 (1912): "geistige Realität (mana, Idee)"; cf. also Horten, "Was bedeutet *Ma'na* als philosophischer Terminus," *ZDMG*, 64 (1910) 391-396; Sweetman, *Islam and Christian Theology* I, 2, p. 232 (1947): "meaning," "nature . . . in the sense of the reality of a thing or its entity."

¹¹ Cf. *Die Hermeneutik des Aristoteles in der arabischen Uebersetzung des Ishāk ibn Ḥunain*, ed. Isidor Pollak (1913), Glossar, pp. 47-48.

¹² *Cont. Cels.* VIII, 12 (PG 11, 1533 C).

¹³ *Adversus Praxean* 7 (PL 2, 162 A B).

¹⁴ *Ibid.* 26 (PL 2, 189 B).

¹⁵ Cf. A. Hahn, *Bibliothek der Symbole und Glaubensregeln der alten Kirche*⁸, § 159, IV: *τρία ὁμολογούντες πράγματα καὶ τρία πρόσωπα*.

¹⁶ *Homilia*, XVI, 4 (PG 31, 480 C); XXIV (604 D); *Epist.* 210, 4 (PG 32, 773 B).

¹⁷ *Apologeticus contra Theodoretum pro XII Capitibus*, I (PG 76, 396 C): *ἀλλὰ πραγμάτων, ἡγουν ὑποστάσεων γέγονε σύνοδος*.

portance for our purpose is that Theodore Abucara, in a work originally written in Arabic but extant only in Greek, describes each of the three hypostases as a *pragma*.¹⁸ Philosophically the term *pragma* is used by Aristotle as a description of that which has a real existence in contrast to that which exists only in formula (*lóγος*) and in name (*ὄνομα*).¹⁹ We have therefore reason to believe that the term *ma'na* used in Arabic as a designation of each attribute which is assumed to exist in God as a real being represents the Greek term *pragma* which has been used in Christianity as a description of the reality of each of the persons in the Trinity. Though we have no direct evidence that the Arabic *ma'na* was similarly used as a description of the reality of each of the persons of the Trinity, for the sense in which this term is used by Yahya Ibn 'Adī is a matter of doubt,²⁰ still there is indirect evidence for its use in a passage of Saadia where the Son and the Holy Spirit of the Christian Trinity are described as "two things" (*shay'ayni*).²¹ The term *shay* is quite evidently used here as a substitute for the term *ma'na* in the sense of *shay*, and the reason for this substitution is probably that by the time of Saadia the term *ma'na* had already acquired certain conceptual philosophical meanings and thus began to lose the meaning it had, in the earliest Arabic presentation of the Christian Trinity, as that of a real "thing" or "person." Elsewhere Saadia himself uses the term *ma'āniyy* as a description of accidental qualities, which have no real existence of their own, in contradistinction to the term *ashyā'*, which he uses as a description of atoms, which are supposed to have a real existence of their own.^{21a}

It can be similarly shown that the term *ṣifah*, which together

¹⁸ Opuscula (PG 97, 1480 B). There is no parallel to this quotation in the Arabic works of Abucara published by P. Constantin Bacha (Les Oeuvres Arabes de Theodore Aboucara, Beyrouth, 1904). Cf. analysis of parallels between those Arabic works and the Greek Opuscula in G. Graf, Die arabischen Schriften des Abū Qurra, pp. 67-77, in Forschungen zur Christlichen Literatur- und Dogmengeschichte, 10 (1910). The technical terms for persons used in these Arabic works are *aqānīm* and *wujūh* (cf. *ibid.*, p. 32).

¹⁹ Soph. Elench. 17, 175a, 8-9.

²⁰ Cf. the doubt raised with regard to the implication of the use of the term *ma'āniyy* as a description of the persons of the Trinity in G. Graf, Die Philosophie und Gotteslehre des Jahja Ibn 'Adī (1910), p. 46. We shall discuss this matter in another chapter.

²¹ Op. cit., II, p. 86, l. 10.

^{21a} *Ibid.*, I, p. 42, ll. 13 and 17. Cf. Ibn Ḥazm, *Faṣl* (1347), I, p. 49, ll. 4-5.

with the term *ma'na* is used by Wāṣil as a description of any of those real attributes which are rejected by him, goes back also to the Greek Christian terminology of the Trinity. The term *ṣifah* comes from the verb *waṣaf* which is used in the Koran in the sense of "describe," "assert," "ascribe," "attribute." At first sight, it would seem quite natural for the early Muslim theologians in their discussion of the problem whether certain terms attributed to God in the Koran are to be taken as real incorporeal beings existing in God to refer to these terms as *ṣifāt* in the sense of "attributes." But the difficulty in this explanation of the use of the term is that *ṣifāt* is not used as a description of the terms attributed to God in the Koran, concerning which there was a question whether they mean real incorporeal being existing in God or whether they mean only our own way of describing God; it is rather used as a description of the view of those who believed that the terms attributed to God in the Koran are real beings. The term *ṣifāt* in itself, like the term *ma'āniyy*, is a description of the belief in the reality of the ideas expressed by these terms, as is evidenced from the passage quoted above from Wāṣil that "he who posits an eternal *ma'na* and *ṣifah* posits two gods," wherein the "eternal *ṣifah*," as well as the "eternal *ma'na*," is already assumed to be a real incorporeal being.

In Christianity with the assumption that the three "things" or "persons" or "hypostases" or "substances," though immaterial, are still distinct from each other and each of them an individual being, the question came up as to what was the "principle of differentiation" (λόγος διαφορᾶς)²² between them to take the place of matter which ordinarily serves as a principle of differentiation between material individual beings. Such a principle of differentiation was found by the Church Fathers in certain properties which characterize each of the persons and distinguish them from each other — distinguishing properties which do not imply matter and which, while distinguishing one person from another, are identical with the respective essences of the persons of which they serve as descriptions. Various Greek terms and phrases are used by the Fathers in designating these distinguishing properties. But in John of Damascus, who may always be taken as the connecting

²² Epist. 38, 3 (PG 32, 328 C).

link between the Church Fathers and early Islam,²³ the following two expressions occur as a description of these distinguishing properties: (1) "hypostatic properties" (ὑποστατικά καὶ ιδιότητες); (2) "that which is characteristic of the proper hypostasis" (τὸ χαρακτηριστικὸν τῆς ἰδίας ὑποστάσεως).²⁴ Thus each of the three persons has a "property" or a "characteristic" which makes it a "thing" distinguished from the two other persons. Now it can be shown that the Greek verb *χαρακτηρίζω* and noun *χαρακτήρ* or *τὸ χαρακτηριστικόν* were used as translations respectively of the Arabic verb *waṣaf* and noun *ṣifah* or *waṣf*. Thus Theodore Abu-cara in those works which were written in Arabic and exist only in Greek speaks of Paul as being described (*χαρακτηρίζεται*) by "properties" (*ιδιότητες*)²⁵ and of gold, which was minted into coins, as being "qua gold" a "thing" which has not "the description (*χαρακτήρα*) of coin."²⁶ In both these places, the Greek verb quite evidently represents the Arabic *waṣaf* and the Greek noun quite evidently represents the Arabic *ṣifah* or *waṣf*. We may therefore assume that the term *ṣifah*, which is made use of by Wāṣil as a description of the realistic conception of attributes rejected by him, represents the Greek *τὸ χαρακτηριστικόν*. Corroborative evidence for this is to be found in Yaḥya Ibn 'Adī (893–974) who, in his representation of the Christian Trinity, says that according to the opinions of the Christians the three persons (*aqānīm*) are *ḥawāṣṣ* and *ṣifāt*.²⁷ Of these two terms, the first, *ḥawāṣṣ*, is the established Arabic translation of the Greek *ιδιότητες*, "properties," one of the terms used by John of Damascus for the "principle of differentiation." The term *ṣifāt* here undoubtedly represents the plural of the Greek *τὸ χαρακτηριστικόν* which is the other term used by John of Damascus for the principle of differentiation.

But more than that. When we try to find what these properties

²³ Cf. L. Cardet et A.-M. Anawati, *Introduction à la Théologie Musulmane* (1948), p. 201.

²⁴ *De Fide Orth.* I, 8 (PG 94, 824 B).

²⁵ *Opuscula* (PG 97, 1473 D).

²⁶ *Ibid.* (1480 C). No parallels to these two quotations in Abucara's original works (cf. above n. 18).

²⁷ Cf. "Un Traité de Yaḥyā ben 'Adī, Défense du Dogme de la Trinité contre les Objections d'al-Kindī," by Augustin Périer in *Revue de l'Orient Chrétien*, 22 (1920–21), p. 5, ll. 2–4.

and characteristics of the three persons of the Trinity were, we shall find that they correspond exactly to the attributes which at first in Islam were held to be real things existing in God. Ordinarily among the Greek Fathers the properties or characteristics are the ungeneratedness of the Father, the generatedness of the Son from the Father, and the proceedingness of the Holy Spirit either again from the Father or from the Father through the Son or from both the Father and the Son. In the doctrine of the Christian Trinity which became known to the Muslims, these characteristics are indeed reproduced. But in addition to these a set of three other characteristics appears in the literature from the earliest time. This set of three characteristics is said to be "existence" or "essence" or "goodness" for the Father, "life" or "wisdom" (or its equivalent "knowledge" or "reason") for the Son, and "wisdom" (or its equivalent "knowledge") or "life" or "power" for the Holy Spirit. Thus Yaḥya Ibn 'Adī says that the property or characteristic of the Father is "goodness" (*jūd*), that of the Son is "wisdom" (*ḥikmah*), and that of the Holy Spirit is "power" (*qudrah*).²⁸ Saadia describes them as (1) essence (*dhāt*), (2) life (*ḥayāt*), and (3) knowledge (*ilm*),²⁹ and al-Muqammaṣ describes the Son or Logos as wisdom (*ḥokmah*) and the Spirit as life (*ḥayyim*).³⁰ Eliyya of Nisibis describes the Father as essence (*dhāt*) or self-existent (*qā'im binafsihi*) and the Son as life (*ḥayāt*) and the Holy Spirit as wisdom (*ḥikmah*).³¹ Shahrastānī, in one place describes the three persons as (1) "existence" (*wujūd*), (2) life (*ḥayāt*) and (3) knowledge (*ilm*),³² and in another place describes them as (1) existence, (2) knowledge, and (3) life.³³ Paul Rahib of Antioch describes the Father as essence (*dhāt*) and the Son as reason (*nuṭq* = Logos) and the Holy Spirit as life (*ḥayāt*).³⁴

²⁸ Op. cit. (above n. 27), p. 5, ll. 4-5.

²⁹ Op. cit., p. 86, ll. 9-10.

³⁰ Op. cit., p. 79.

³¹ Cf. *Vingt Traités Théologiques d'Auteurs Arabes Chrétiens*, by P. Louis Cheikho, 2nd edition, 1920, p. 126, ll. 2-3; cf. L. E. Browne, *Eclipse of Christianity in Asia*, p. 124, where Eliyya of Nisibis is also quoted, from Cheikho's *Trois Traités*, p. 33, as describing the Father as essence, the Son as the Logos, and the Holy Spirit as life. Cf. also J. W. Sweetman, *Islam and Christian Theology*, I, 2, p. 92.

³² Shahrastānī, p. 172, l. 10.

³³ *Ibid.*, p. 175, l. 11; cf. p. 173, ll. 15-16.

³⁴ *Vingt Traités*, etc., p. 20, ll. 9-10.

The origin of these sets of characteristics has so far not been established, for while the term "life" is applied in the New Testament to the Son³⁵ and "power" is applied in the New Testament to both the Son³⁶ and the Holy Spirit³⁷ and the term "wisdom" is applied in the New Testament to the Son³⁸ and by some Church Fathers also to the Holy Spirit,³⁹ no Greek Father has so far been discovered who characterized the three persons by those properties by which they are characterized in the passages quoted from Arabic sources. About eighty years ago, David Kaufmann, commenting upon the passage quoted above from Saadia, made the assertion that Saadia's identification of the three persons with "essence," "life," and "knowledge" has no parallel in the history of Christian doctrine and this assertion was corroborated by Professor Hermann Reuter of Breslau, though Professor Franz Delitzsch of Leipzig suggested two irrelevant passages, one from Augustine and the other from Gregory of Nyssa.⁴⁰ I myself, in the course of my reading, have come across only one Christian Church Father, and him writing in Latin, who uses terms like those quoted above from Arabic authors in connection with the three persons of the Trinity. That Latin Father is Marius Victorinus, who in one place explains the unity of the three persons in God after the analogy of the soul in which existence (*esse*), life (*vita*) and intelligence (*intelligentia*), though distinct, are still united by their relation to each other,⁴¹ and in another place says that the three persons are three powers, namely, existence (*esse*), life (*vivere*), and intelligence (*intelligere*).⁴² It is probably under the influence of this statement of Marius Victorinus that John Scotus Erigena says that "those who inquired into the truth have handed down that by essence (*essentiam*) is to be understood the Father, by wisdom (*sapientiam*) the Son, and by life (*vitam*) the Holy

³⁵ John 1:4; Col. 3:4; cf. John 11:25; 14:6.

³⁶ 1 Cor. 1:24.

³⁷ Luke 1:35.

³⁸ 1 Cor. 1:24.

³⁹ Cf. Theophilus, Ad Autol. II. 15 and 18; Irenaeus, Adv. Haer. IV, 20, 3; cf. IV, 7, 4; IV, 20, 1.

⁴⁰ Cf. D. Kaufmann, Geschichte der Attributenlehre in der jüdischen Religionsphilosophie (1877), p. 41, n. 77.

⁴¹ Adversus Arium I, 63 (PL 8, 1087 D).

⁴² Ibid. IV, 21 (1128 D); cf. I, 13 (1048 B).

Spirit.”⁴³ While Marius Victorinus cannot be considered as the source of the descriptions of the Trinity known to the Muslims — for the Muslim contact with Christianity was with its Greek and not with its Latin branch — still from Victorinus as well as Erigena we may get some clue as to how that description of the Trinity may have reached the Muslims. Marius Victorinus as well as John Scotus Erigena were under the influence of Neoplatonism. Moreover Erigena’s words “those who inquired into the truth have handed down” (*inquisitores veritatis tradiderunt*) would seem to indicate that this description of the Trinity was not something that could be found in the standard works of the Fathers but rather something that only “those who inquired into the truth,” namely, those who like himself searched for the truth in the writings of the Neoplatonists, “have handed down” as a sort of esoteric knowledge, which he was divulging. Now Neoplatonism is characterized by triads which were not unlike the Trinity of Christianity. Let us then study these Neoplatonic triads⁴⁴ to see whether they might not furnish us with some information.

The Neoplatonists whom we shall bring into play in this connection are Jamblichus, Theodore of Asine, and Proclus.

Jamblichus, as quoted by Damascius, describes his triad as (1) Father or subsistence (*ὑπαρξιδις*), (2) power (*δύναμις*), and (3) intellect (*νοῦς*) or intelligence (*νόησις*).⁴⁵ Theodore of Asine, as quoted by Proclus, describes his triad as (1) existence (*τὸ εἶναι*), (2) intelligence (*τὸ νοεῖν*), and (3) life (*τὸ ζῆν*).⁴⁶ Proclus himself has several descriptions of the triad. In three passages, which we shall combine and treat together, his triad is described as follows: (1) essence (*οὐσία*)⁴⁷ or the existent (*τὸ ὄν*)⁴⁸ or subsistence (*ὑπαρξιδις*)⁴⁹ or existence (*τὸ εἶναι*);⁵⁰ (2) life (*ζωή*)⁵¹ or

⁴³ De Divisione Naturae I, 13 (PL 122, 455 C).

⁴⁴ On the Neoplatonic triads, see Zeller, *Phil. d. Gr.* III, 2⁴, pp. 748, 784, 857–858.

⁴⁵ Damascius, *Philosophi Platonici Quaestiones de Primis Principiis*, 54 (ed. Jos. Kopp, 1826), p. 144.

⁴⁶ Proclus, In Timaeum, 225 B.

⁴⁷ Plat. Theol. III, 14, p. 146; IV, I, p. 179.

⁴⁸ Ibid. IV, I, p. 180; Inst. Theol. 103. From the context of this latter reference it is evident that *τὸ ὄν* is to be taken here in the sense of “the existent” rather than in the sense of “existence.”

⁴⁹ Plat. Theol. IV, I, p. 180.

⁵⁰ Inst. Theol. 103.

⁵¹ Plat. Theol. III, 14, p. 146; IV, I, pp. 179, 180; Inst. Theol. 103.

power (δύναμις);⁵² (3) intellect (νοῦς)⁵³ or intelligence (τὸ νοεῖν).⁵⁴ In another passage, he describes his triad as "goodness" (ἀγαθότης), power (δύναμις), and knowledge (γνώσις).⁵⁵

It is in these Neoplatonic triads that we may find the origin of the *ṣifāt* of the Christian Trinity as it became known to the Muslims as well as the origin of the descriptions of the Trinity which we have quoted from Victorinus and Erigena. The Arabic goodness (*jūd*) and essence (*dhāt*) and self-existent (*qā'im bi-nafsihi*) and existence (*wujūd*) used as a description of the first person of the Trinity reflect the Greek οὐσία, τὸ ὄν and τὸ εἶναι or ὑπαρξις used as a description of the first member of the Neoplatonic triad. The Arabic life (*ḥayāt*) and wisdom (*ḥikmah*) or reason (*nutq*) or knowledge (*ilm*) used as a description of either the second or the third person of the Trinity reflect the Greek τὸ ζῆν and νοῦς or νόησις, or τὸ νοεῖν or γνώσις used as a description of either the second or the third member of the Neoplatonic triad. Again, the Arabic power (*qudrah*) used as a description of the third person of the Trinity reflects the Greek δύναμις used as a description of the second member of the Neoplatonic triad.

But whether we are right or not in our explanation of the origin of the *ṣifāt* of the three persons of the Christian Trinity which occurs in Arabic literature, it is quite evident that in these Arabic restatements of the Christian doctrine of the Trinity the term "self-existent" or "existence" or "essence" or "goodness" was used as a description of the Father and the term "life" or "wisdom" or "knowledge" was used as a description either of the Son or of the Holy Spirit and the term "power" was used as a description of the Holy Spirit.

Now when we study the reports of the teachings of the earliest individual opponents of real attributes, we shall find that they contain, in various twofold or threefold combinations, only the terms "life," "wisdom" or "knowledge," and "power," those very same terms which we have met with as descriptions of the second and third persons of the Trinity.

⁵² Plat. Theol. IV, 1, p. 180.

⁵³ Plat. Theol. III, 14, p. 146; IV, 1, pp. 179, 180; Inst. Theol. 103.

⁵⁴ Inst. Theol. 103.

⁵⁵ Proclus, In Timaeum, 118 E.

In his report of Wāṣil, Shahrastānī at first simply states that he denied the existence of real attributes, without mentioning what these attributes were, but then he goes on to say that the followers of Wāṣil, under the influence of philosophy, not only denied the existence of real attributes but also undertook to explain how the terms "knowledge" and "power," which are predicated of God in the Koran, should be understood.⁵⁶ The inference to be drawn from this statement is that "knowledge" and "power" were the only terms which formed the subject of controversy between Wāṣil and the attributists. Indeed, prior to his restatement of the individual view of Wāṣil and of the particular view of his immediate followers, Shahrastānī says of the Wāṣilites in general that they were for "the denial of the attributes of God, such as knowledge, power, will, and life."⁵⁷ But when he immediately adds that "this view was at first not fully developed,"⁵⁸ he indicates that the four terms he mentioned belonged to a later period when, we know, a list of four terms existed. In his report of Jahm, Shahrastānī quotes him first as saying that "it is not permissible that God should be described by attributes by which His creatures are described, for this would result in likening God to others," and then adds a remark of his own: "And so he denies that God is living and knowing."⁵⁹ This last remark of Shahrastānī seems to be an echo of the early time when the controversy over attributes turned only on the terms "life" and "knowledge."⁶⁰ Ḍirār, as reported by al-Ash'arī, stated his anti-realistic explanation of attributes only with regard to the terms "knowledge," "power," and "life,"⁶¹ or only with regard to the terms "knowledge" and "power."⁶² Similarly Abū-al-Hudhail is reported to have stated his anti-realistic conception of attributes either only with regard to the

⁵⁶ Shahrastānī, p. 31, l. 19-p. 32, l. 2.

⁵⁷ Ibid., p. 31, ll. 16-17.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ Ibid., p. 60, ll. 8-9.

⁶⁰ The passage in a manuscript which reports in the name of Jahm a longer list of terms (see Pines, *Beiträge zur islamischen Atomenlehre* (1936), pp. 124-125, and W. M. Watt, "Early Discussion about the Koran," *Muslim World* 40 (1950), pp. 28-29) deals with anthropomorphisms and not with attributes, that is to say, it deals with a denial of corporeal attributes of God but not with a denial of incorporeal attributes.

⁶¹ al-Ash'arī, *Maqālāt al-Islamīyīn*, p. 166, ll. 14-15 (ed. H. Ritter).

⁶² Ibid., p. 478, l. 15-p. 488, l. 1; cf. Shahrastānī, p. 63, ll. 6-7.

terms "knowledge," "power," and "life,"⁶³ or only with regard to the terms "knowledge" and "power."⁶⁴ Al-Muqammaṣ in the statement of his anti-realistic conception of attributes, reflecting the Mu'tazilite influence, concentrates on the terms "living" and "wise," even though in the course of his discussion he introduces from the lists current in his own time, such terms as "seeing" and "hearing."⁶⁵ Similarly Saadia in the statement of his anti-realistic conception of attributes, again reflecting the influence of the Mu'tazilites, mentions only the terms "living," "powerful," and "knowing."⁶⁶

That the original controversy about attributes turned only on the terms "knowledge," "power," and "life" may be also gathered from Shahrastānī's general statement about the Mu'tazilites. Wishing to explain how the Mu'tazilites, who "deny eternal attributes altogether," interpret the terms predicated of God in the Koran, he mentions only the terms "knowledge," "power," and "life."⁶⁷ The fact that at the time of Shahrastānī lists of more than three terms, a list of four terms and a list of seven terms, formed the subject of controversy between the Mu'tazilites and attributists, and still in his restatement of the Mu'tazilite view he mentions only these three terms, shows that originally only these three terms formed the subject of controversy on the problem of attributes and that only these three terms were claimed by the attributists to represent eternal real beings in God. Indeed, in another place Shahrastānī says that the Mu'tazilites deny the attributes of knowledge, power, will, life, hearing, and seeing,⁶⁸ but these six attributes are quite evidently taken from the list of seven attributes current in his own time and do not represent the original list of attributes which formed the subject of discussion in the early stage of the problem. Similarly, when al-Ghazālī says that the Mu'tazilites, in agreement with the philosophers, denied the attributes of knowledge (*'ilm*), power (*qudrah*), and will (*irādah*),⁶⁹ we may assume that only the mention of "three" repre-

⁶³ al-Ash'arī, op. cit., p. 165, ll. 5-6; Shahrastānī, p. 34, ll. 13-14.

⁶⁴ Baghdādī, al-Farq bain al-Firaq, p. 108, ll. 7-9 (ed. Muhammad Badr, Cairo, 1910).

⁶⁵ Op. cit., pp. 78-79.

⁶⁶ Op. cit. II, p. 84, l. 15.

⁶⁷ Shahrastānī, p. 30, ll. 7-8.

⁶⁸ Ibid., p. 61, l. 20-p. 62, l. 1.

⁶⁹ Tahāfut al-Falāsifah VI, 1, p. 163, ll. 2-3 (ed. Bouyges).

sents the original view of the Mu'tazilites, whereas the term "will" is taken from the later list of four or seven, current at the time of al-Ghazālī, and substituted for "life" of the original list.

Comparing the list of terms in the earliest statements of the problem of attributes and the list of terms in the statements of the doctrine of the Trinity as known to Muslims, we find that both of them contain the terms "life," "power," and "knowledge," or also "wisdom" and "reason" as the equivalents of "knowledge." Quite evidently there is some kind of relation between the Muslim belief in attributes and the Christian belief in the Trinity. Moreover, when we scrutinize the list of these terms in the Christian Trinity, we find that it is the Son and the Holy Spirit that are described respectively either as "life" and "knowledge" or as "knowledge" and "life" or as "knowledge" and "power." Quite evidently it is these two persons of the Trinity, the Son and the Holy Spirit, that were transformed into Muslim attributes, for, as we have seen, in the earliest discussion of the problem of attributes the attributes mentioned are either "life" and "knowledge" or "knowledge" and "life" or "life," "knowledge," and "power." The question now is, how was the transformation effected? What was the reason that has led the Muslims to adopt a Christian doctrine, which is explicitly rejected in the Koran, and transform it into a Muslim doctrine?

Let us then reconstruct the logical situation which could have led to the substitution in Muslim theology of divine attributes for the Christian Trinity.

From the passages quoted, as well as from other passages, we may gather some of the main features of the Christian doctrine of the Trinity as it was presented to the Muslims. These main features were four. First, there was the orthodox Christian belief in the equality of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, each of them being God.⁷⁰ Second, the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit are each a hypostasis or person (*aqnūm*) or a thing (*ma'na*); Godhood, which is common to all three, is their

⁷⁰ Cf. Yaḥya Ibn 'Adī's quotation of the following statement by Muslims: "The hypostases are according to them equal in all respects" (*Petits Traités Apologétiques de Yaḥyā Ben 'Adī*, by A. Périer, p. 36). That the Christians called the Trinity God is implied in the Koran; cf. below at nn. 74, 75.

common essence or substance.⁷¹ Third, the "principle of differentiation" between these three persons or things is that the Father is "goodness" or "essence" or "self-existence" or "existence"; the Son is "life" or "wisdom" or "knowledge" or "reason"; the Holy Spirit is "life" or "wisdom" or "knowledge" or "power."⁷² Fourth, these three sets of terms by which the three persons or things are described are called "properties" (*ḥawāṣṣ*) or characteristics (*ṣifāt*).⁷³

Let us now imagine that when the Christians presented this conception of the Trinity to the Muslims, the latter quoted against it the Koranic verses, "say not Three . . . God is only one God"⁷⁴ and "they surely are infidels who say, God is the third of three, for there is no God but one God."⁷⁵ Undismayed by this answer, however, the Christians, we imagine, continued to argue that their God is also one God, maintaining that the three "persons" or "things" are all one in essence, differing only in the peculiarity of their properties or characteristics. In fact, they would say, these three persons are only properties and characteristics of God, though properties and characteristics which have a real existence in God. Where in the Koran, they would challenge the Muslims, do you find a denial of properties or characteristics in God? Moreover, the Christians would argue, these three "persons" or "things" or "properties" or "characteristics," which we call Father and Son and Holy Spirit, are descriptions of God as "existing" or "good" and as "living," "knowing," "powerful." Would you deny such descriptions of God? Does not the Koran itself describe God as "the existent" (*al-qayyūn*),⁷⁶ as "the living" (*al-ḥayy*),⁷⁷ as

⁷¹ In the Arabic translations of the Greek formula *μὴ οὐσία, τρεῖς ὑποστάσεις*, the term *hypostases* is translated by *aqānīm*, but, as for the term *ousia*, it is translated either by *jauhar*, "substance" (cf. Yaḥyā Ibn 'Adī in *Petits Traités Apologétiques*, p. 36, l. 8; Shahrastānī, p. 172, l. 9) or by *dhāt*, "essence" (cf. Paul Rahib of Antioch in *Vingt Traités*, etc., p. 27, l. 11). Similarly in Latin versions of the formula, *ousia* is translated either *substantia* or *essentia* (cf. Augustine, *De Trinitate* V, 8, 10–V, 9, 10). Sometimes it is translated by *kiyan* (Eliyya of Nisibis in *Vingt Traités*, etc., p. 126, l. 3), which, as a literal translation of *ousia*, may be taken to mean both "essence" and "substance."

⁷² Cf. above at nn. 28–34.

⁷³ Cf. above at nn. 24–27.

⁷⁴ Surah 4:169.

⁷⁵ Surah 5:77.

⁷⁶ Surah 2:256.

⁷⁷ Surah 2:256.

"the knowing" (*al-'alīm*),⁷⁸ as "the powerful" (*al-qadīr*),⁷⁹ and as "the merciful" (*al-rahīm*),⁸⁰ which means that He is good? And do you not admit that the property or characteristic of "existence" or "goodness," which we attribute to the Father in our Trinity and the Koran attributes to God, stands for something real? Why then should you not admit that the properties or characteristics of "life" and "knowledge" or "power" stand also for things which are real?

The Muslims, we assume, must have felt compelled to admit the cogency of the reasoning. Still they were bound by the Koran to reject the Christian doctrine of the Trinity. Why then was the doctrine rejected in the Koran? they asked themselves. And in order to answer this question, they began to study carefully the verses in the Koran in which the Trinity is rejected.⁸¹ From these verses they gathered that the Trinity was rejected not on the ground that "life" and "knowledge" and "power," which the Christians variously identified with the Son and the Holy Spirit, were conceived of by them, like "existence" (or "goodness"), as being each a real "person" or "thing," but on the ground that "knowledge" and "power" or "life" were conceived of by them as being equal with "existence" in divinity and that, like "existence," they are each called by them God. And so the Muslims finally met the challenge of the Christians. They said: We indeed admit that "life" and "knowledge" or "knowledge" and "power" or "life" and "knowledge" and "power" represent real "things," just as "existence" represents a real "thing." But we do not admit that they are equal with "existence" in divinity and that they are each to be called "God" in the same way as "existence" is called "God." These attributes of "life" and "knowledge" or of "knowledge" and "power" or of "life" and "knowledge" and "power" are indeed to be taken as "things" existing in God from eternity and inseparable from Him, but they are not to be called God. There is no God but one God.

The denial of Godhood is one difference between the attributes

⁷⁸ Surah 2:30.

⁷⁹ Surah 30:53.

⁸⁰ Surah 1:2.

⁸¹ The transition from the Koranic conception of the Trinity to the later Muslim conception of the Trinity will be discussed in another chapter.

of Islam and the second and third persons of the Christian Trinity. Another difference between them is the denial of any causal relation between the attributes and God. In Christianity, where the second person is said to be the Son of God, that very conception establishes a causal relation between them. A similar causal relation is conceived to exist also between the first and third person or between both the first and second persons and the third person, for the Holy Spirit was believed to proceed either from the Father alone or from the Father through the Son or from both the Father and the Son. In Islam, however, there is no causal relation between God and his attributes. What relationship existed between them the attributists never succeeded in explaining in philosophic language. All they could say is that God and the attributes are coeternal; there is a real distinction between them but that distinction is not one between cause and effect but rather between Godhood and non-Godhood.

This, we imagine, was the logical origin of the doctrine of real attributes in Islam. It explains not only how the belief in attributes came into existence, but also why the early controversy was only about the attributes of life, knowledge, and power. These, as we have seen, were the only terms which Christians, to the knowledge of Muslims, used as characteristics of the Son and the Holy Spirit. The omission of the terms "self-existent," "existence," "essence," and "goodness" from the earliest list of attributes, even though these terms occur in the Christian Trinity as characteristics of God the Father, is, as we have seen, not without reason. These terms, in the earliest stages, were considered as characteristics of God himself and were identified with God himself. They were, of course, real in the sense that God himself was a real being; but they were not, like "life" and "knowledge" or "power," distinct from God.

Originally, as we have seen, only these three terms, "life," "knowledge" or "wisdom," and "power," were a subject of controversy between the attributists and the Mu'tazilites as to whether they stood for real beings or not. Later lists containing other terms appear as subject of this controversy, such as a list of four, in which "will" is added to the aforementioned three, and a list of seven, in which the terms "hearing," "seeing," and "speaking"

are added to the four in the list of four, and similar other still longer lists. Though the addition of some of the terms in the lists of four and seven may be explained on certain historical or philosophic grounds — and we shall discuss this on another occasion — on the whole the difference in the number of attributes mentioned by the various Muslim theologians who believed in their reality may be explained, as says Maimonides,⁸² on the ground of certain Koranic texts which they happened to follow.

Thus the orthodox Muslim belief in the reality of attributes is traceable to the Christian doctrine of the Trinity. Should we then say that, just as the orthodox Muslim belief in attributes is traceable to the orthodox Christian doctrine of the Trinity, the Mu'tazilite denial of the reality of attributes is similarly traceable to heretical Christian views which denied the reality of the second and third persons of the Trinity? This is a question which we shall discuss in another chapter.⁸³

⁸² Op. cit. I, 53.

⁸³ In that chapter, we shall discuss the passage in Abucara which is taken by C. H. Becker ("Christliche Polemik und islamische Dogmenbildung," *Zeitschrift für Assyriologie*, 26 (1912), pp. 189-199) as the source of the Mu'tazilite denial of attributes.

EMERSON, BARZILLAI FROST, AND THE DIVINITY SCHOOL ADDRESS

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THE REVEREND BARZILLAI FROST, minister of the Unitarian church in Concord from 1837 to 1857, does not loom large in the biographies of Emerson. Cabot does not even mention him; Rusk refers to him but once. His name seldom appears in the Journals, and in the published letters there are only a few unimportant allusions to him.

Yet there is clear evidence that Frost greatly affected Emerson at a critical juncture in the latter's career, that it was because of Emerson's reaction to Frost's preaching that the Divinity School Address took the shape and color that it did. Because Emerson named no names in that Address, it has been taken at face value, as a general and presumably just criticism of the dead and formal preaching of the day. It has not been appreciated that crucial passages of it were originally specific criticisms of one particular minister, later generalized and made anonymous for a public occasion. But once that fact is made clear, and the relationship between Emerson and his own minister has been probed, a wholly new dimension is added to our understanding of the Address.

I propose, therefore, to reconstruct the origin and gestation of the Divinity School Address in the living context of Emerson's experiences in pulpit and pew, Sunday after Sunday, in 1837 and 1838. The result may well be a new perspective on the state of religion and the churches at that time, a clearer picture of Emerson's methods of literary composition, and above all a greater awareness of the importance of the Address in the spiritual biography of its author.

I.

On Wednesday, the first day of February, 1837, the Reverend Barzillai Frost was ordained by the Church in Concord, and in-

stalled as colleague to the aged Dr. Ezra Ripley. Ralph Waldo Emerson was present; seated next to him during a part of the proceedings was the Reverend Caleb Stetson, who had ridden over from Medford to deliver the "Address to the Society." Stetson was a member of the group that had begun to meet from time to time as "Hedge's Club," or the "Transcendental Club." During the ordination ceremonies, he kept whispering witticisms to Emerson, who found it difficult to maintain an appropriately dignified demeanor.¹

The most impressive part of the ordination service was the Charge, delivered by the Reverend Henry Ware, Jr. Ware had been Emerson's predecessor as minister of the Second Church in Boston. In 1829, ill-health had forced him to give up his pulpit and to accept instead a professorship of pastoral care at the Divinity School in Cambridge. Of the Unitarian ministers in and around Boston, he was second only to Dr. Channing in popular esteem. He was regarded as an eloquent and moving preacher, though perhaps not quite so polished as Channing; and he was conspicuously successful in the pastoral care of his flock. The Unitarians of that generation thought of him as the ideal type of the parish minister, whose accomplishments were a living example of the possibilities for good which the office of the minister afforded.²

To the students at the Divinity School, Ware was a spiritual counsellor and friend, quite as much as a teacher. No one was ever more beloved by his students than he, and they almost always asked him — as Barzillai Frost did — to participate in their ordinations. His concept of religion was deeply emotional, and he communicated to his hearers some sense of his own piety. His Charge to Frost was a threefold injunction: to be diligent in business, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord, "these three, industry, enthusiasm, and piety, — but the greatest of these is PIETY." Of this Charge, an observer wrote: "It was the overflowing of pure sentiment, and united itself with the most tender sympathies of the heart. . . . Its spirit was that of a fond father, when he

¹ Journals of Ralph Waldo Emerson (Boston, 1909-1914), IV, 188-189.

² Emerson himself regarded Ware as one of the most eloquent of the Boston preachers. See Journals, VI, 455-456; VII, 170.

is committing his dearly beloved son to the government of himself. It was literally a lesson never to be forgotten.”³

Although Emerson usually referred to Frost in his Journals as “the young preacher,” the new minister was actually only a year younger than Emerson himself. He was born in Effingham, New Hampshire, on June 18, 1804. His father, a farmer, died when he was only two years old. Despite the handicap of poverty, he graduated from Harvard in 1830, and from the Divinity School in 1835, at the age of thirty-one. While in the Divinity School, he taught mathematics for a year to undergraduates. Following graduation, he preached at Northfield and at Barnstable, prior to receiving a call to the Concord church.⁴

Frost at once began to make a place for himself in Concord. At town meeting in March, he was elected to the School Committee, as Emerson had been a year earlier.⁵ In this position, he served faithfully and effectively for many years. There were three hundred families on his list for parish calls. And most of the burden of preaching fell on him also, for Dr. Ripley was almost ninety years of age and nearly blind.

For three months after the ordination, Emerson had no opportunity to sample the preaching of the new minister. He was supplying the pulpit in East Lexington both Sunday morning and afternoon; and when absent from that pulpit, he was exchanging with other ministers. But in May, Emerson’s old friend, Frederic Henry Hedge, agreed to take the East Lexington church for four Sundays, and Emerson was free to attend church in Concord.⁶

On May 7, Dr. Ripley baptized little Waldo, who wore the very same robe in which Emerson’s brother Charles had once been christened. It was almost a year to the day since Charles’s untimely death; and the parents could not help thinking of the

³ Concord Yeoman’s Gazette, Feb. 4, 1837.

⁴ Henry Frost, “Barzillai Frost,” in *Memoirs of Members of the Social Circle in Concord*, 3rd. Ser. (Cambridge, 1907); also Henry A. Miles, *A Sermon Preached in the First Parish Church, Concord, December 10, 1858, at the Burial of Rev. Barzillai Frost* (Cambridge, 1859).

⁵ Concord Freeman, March 11, 1837.

⁶ Emerson’s manuscript “Preaching Record” shows that he preached in East Lexington in February, March, and April, every Sunday except as follows: Feb. 19, at Waltham, William Silsbee at East Lexington; Feb. 26, C. A. Bartol at East Lexington; March 19, at Waltham; March 26, at Lowell; April 16, in the afternoon

"group of departed spirits . . . who hovered around the patriarch & the babe."⁷ Barzillai Frost preached that day, and Emerson was not pleased. "I cannot hear the young men whose theological instruction is exclusively owed to Cambridge & to public institution," he wrote, "without feeling how much happier was my star which rained on me influences of ancestral religion." The Puritan tradition which had been handed down through a succession of ministers among his own forebears, and which he knew at first hand in his Aunt Mary, seemed to reveal a depth of religious sentiment which Barzillai Frost lacked. Education, thought Emerson, produces no more than "a normal piety . . . which only rarely devout genius could countervail."⁸

Emerson's dissatisfaction with Frost's preaching was so intense that he could not dismiss it from his mind. "I could ill dissemble my impatience at the show of instruction without one single real & penetrating word," he began once more.

Here is a young man who has not yet learned the capital secret of his profession namely to convert life into truth. Not one single fact in all his experience has he yet imported into his doctrine. & there he stands pitiable & magisterial, & without nausea reads page after page of mouth-filling words & seems to himself to be doing a deed. This man has ploughed & rode & talked & bought & sold he has read books, & eaten & drunk; his cow calves; his bull genders; he smiles & suffers & loves yet, all this experience is still aloof from his intellect; he has not converted one jot of it all into wisdom.

In all Frost's sermon, there was "not a surmise a hint . . . that he had ever lived at all. Not one line did he draw out of real history."⁹ Two weeks later, when Emerson was stirred to renewed condemnation, he acknowledged that there was one thing that

at West Lexington; April 23, at Wayland; April 30, at Watertown. The "Preaching Record," like the manuscript Journals, is deposited in the Harvard College Library; both have been used by courtesy of Mr. E. W. Forbes and the Emerson Memorial Association. See also R. L. Rusk, *The Letters of Ralph Waldo Emerson* (New York, 1939), II, 68, 71-72, 73.

⁷ Journals, IV, 232. Although citations will be made to the printed Journals, all quotations in this paper have been corrected, and when necessary enlarged, by reference to the original manuscript.

⁸ Journals, IV, 229-230.

⁹ Ibid., IV, 232-233. With this passage, compare the corresponding part of the Divinity School Address in *Works* (Boston, 1903), I, 138.

could be said for Frost's preaching: "Among provocatives, the next best thing to good preaching is bad preaching. I have even more thoughts during or enduring it than at other times."¹⁰

The dismal truth is that Barzillai Frost was a mediocre preacher. Emerson was not alone in thinking so; even Henry A. Miles frankly admitted as much, and he was Frost's most intimate friend. He had known Frost as a student in Cambridge, where they had been accustomed to go on walks together; and he had given the Right Hand of Fellowship at the ordination. "Doubtless you all early felt," he said at Frost's funeral, "that there was neither flexibility of voice, nor play of imagination, nor gush of emotion to give him, as a preacher, that power to which other endowments fairly entitled him." Frost's sermons were evidently delivered in a loud and positive monotone — a "ragged half screaming bass," as Emerson described it. So Miles tactfully acknowledged that "some did not sympathize fully with [Frost's] way of stating the case"; that "they felt that God had other methods also of commending his truth to human souls . . ." ¹¹

Among his colleagues in the Unitarian ministry, Frost was respected for the clarity of his mind at the same time that he was criticized for a certain narrowness in his perceptions. They always welcomed him at meetings of the local ministerial association, in the affairs of which he exerted great influence; for "if his opinions were not always accepted, if at times they seemed deficient in breadth, his lucid statement of them opened discussion, shed important cross-lights upon the subject, and brought out spirited replies from others, so that it came to be observed that his presence was enough to insure a good meeting of the Association." ¹²

Frost's real abilities showed to better advantage throughout the week than on Sunday. "No small part of his sturdy influence was wielded in other places than the pulpit," Miles commented; "he was ready everywhere for an earnest talk, — in the streets, in the fields; and few had more ability or relish for an improvised discussion." He was active in reform movements, especially temper-

¹⁰ Journals, IV, 244.

¹¹ Miles, Sermon at the Burial of Barzillai Frost, 9, 11; Journals, IV, 244.

¹² Miles, *op. cit.*, 16.

ance and anti-slavery. But above all, he was a devoted and successful parish minister: "one who through the week was diligent in your service, a guide of your schools, a counsellor at your firesides, a comforter at your sick and dying beds . . ." Throughout, he was blessed with "an unfailing cheerfulness and healthiness of mind"; so that for twenty years he went about Concord doing good, "daily lifting up this community to a higher tone . . ." ¹³

Yet Frost's merits, and they were very genuine ones, were not of a sort to impress Emerson; while his liabilities were ones which Emerson would judge most harshly. Frost was a good shepherd of his flock; but Emerson, who had found pastoral duties uncongenial while minister of the Second Church, regarded them of secondary importance. Frost was civic-minded; but it required a very considerable provocation to rouse in Emerson a sense of community responsibility. What Emerson was looking for was a seer, a prophet, gifted with the power to transform the lives of men by the sheer magic of his eloquence. It is the end of eloquence, he declared, "in a half-hour's discourse, — perhaps by a few sentences, — to persuade a multitude of persons to renounce their opinions, and change the course of life." ¹⁴ This was the quality he looked for in the young preacher, and no other talents, however real, could compensate for its absence. It would be hard to conceive of anyone less fitted than Frost to satisfy Emerson at that particular juncture.

II.

Emerson resumed his preaching at East Lexington on June 4, 1837, but he soon became so ill that he could do very little work. He went to Providence at the end of the week, as he had promised to do, to speak at the dedication of Hiram Fuller's school; but apart from that trip, he avoided all unnecessary exertion. He was suffering from an "inflammation on the lungs," and was doubtless fearful of consumption. He was still responsible for the preaching at East Lexington, but John Sullivan Dwight took his place for

¹³ Ibid., 10, 12-13, 14.

¹⁴ Emerson, Works, X, 282.

five Sundays, June 11 through July 9. He thought very seriously of taking a long trip for his health; but he ventured no farther than Plymouth, where Lidian, little Waldo, and he spent a week with her family. They were away on the Fourth of July, when the battle monument was dedicated at Concord and his hymn was sung. Barzillai Frost and Dr. Ripley both participated in the ceremonies. But by mid-July, Emerson's health had improved enough to permit him to resume preaching, and he was back in the pulpit at East Lexington on July 16. From that date until the end of November, he preached on all but three or four Sundays.¹⁵

On only one of Emerson's free Sundays is it clear that he went to hear Mr. Frost. On October 1, he noted in his Journal: "The young preacher preached from his ears & his memory, & never a word from his soul. His sermon was loud & hollow." But even on those Sundays when Emerson escaped the pain of listening to bad preaching, he did not avoid completely the man whose sermons distressed him. On October 15, on his return from Billerica, where he had preached all day, he had occasion to call on Frost at the latter's home. "I looked over the few books in the young clergyman's study yesterday till I shivered with cold Priestley; Noyes; Rosenmuller; Joseph Allen, & other Sunday School books; Schleusner; Norton; & the Saturday Night of Taylor; the dirty comfort of the farmer could easily seem preferable to the elegant poverty of the young clergyman."¹⁶

This catalogue of books and authors told Emerson, as it tells us, precisely what Frost's professional training had been and what his theological inclinations were. "The historical argument for Christianity, and that drawn from miracles," Henry Miles declared, "so completely convinced and satisfied [Frost's] mind, that he was never like a judge who gives a doubtful and timid decision, but rather like one who knows what he affirms, and therefore

¹⁵ "Preaching Record"; Rusk, *Letters*, II, 79-81, 83, 85, 88; Stanley Williams, "Unpublished Letters of Emerson," *Journal of English and Germanic Philology*, XXVI (1927), 476; *Yeoman's Gazette*, July 8, 1837. The "Preaching Record" shows that Emerson was at East Lexington every Sunday except as follows: July 23, at Framingham; Aug. 13, when Hedge preached for him; Aug. 20, at Waltham; Aug. 27; Sept. 3 (?); Oct. 1, Richard Austin at E. Lexington; Oct. 8, at Waltham; Oct. 15, at Billerica; Nov. 12, at Waltham; Nov. 19, at Concord; Nov. 26, at Weston.

¹⁶ *Journals*, IV, 300-301, 324.

utters himself with confidence." Like his professors at the Divinity School, Frost believed that Christianity is a divinely inspired religion, attested by the miracles of Christ. The Bible is the only source of Christian truth, as distinguished from the truths of natural religion which may be determined by the use of the reason alone. Hence Biblical criticism — Noyes, Rosenmüller, Schleusner, Norton — was regarded at Cambridge as the central core of ministerial training; for it made it possible for each student to determine for himself the truths of Christianity, uncorrupted by errors in the text and unperturbed by human systems of doctrine. Time and time again Frost had reviewed the internal and external evidences of Christianity, especially the argument from miracles, "carefully examining one by one the multitude of points which they embrace, turning them over in a variety of lights, striking them all round to find if there was anywhere a flaw, or whether they would give the ring of sound metal; and the result had made him sure that here was a trustworthy reliance, here was solid ground, away from which everything to him was vague, shadowy, uncertain, and divested of authority."¹⁷

Emerson had been trained in these very same principles, and had once accepted them; but, by 1837, he had completely discarded them. In 1831, he could still preach — though not without uncertainty and fumbling — a sermon which restated the traditional doctrine of miracles. By 1833, he had discovered that the distinction between the Reason and the Understanding was "a philosophy itself." In January, 1837, he made an extended application of this new philosophy in the lecture on religion which was one of the series he gave that winter in Boston. If every man possesses this transcendental Reason, if intuition of the absolute is possible for all, then the historical argument for a particular revelation attested by miracles shrivels into triviality.¹⁸

Into this realm of vague speculation, as he regarded it, Frost had no desire to venture. "Through life he concerned himself with those thoughts which he could apprehend with clearness and certainty," Henry Miles recorded. "He knew exactly the point

¹⁷ Miles, *Sermon at the Burial of Barzillai Frost*, 10-11.

¹⁸ A. C. McGiffert, Jr., *Young Emerson Speaks* (Boston, 1938), 120-126; Rusk, *Letters*, I, 412-413; J. E. Cabot, *A Memoir of Ralph Waldo Emerson* (Boston, 1887), II, 726-728.

where any subject shaded off into poetry, or sentiment, or mysticism, and at that point he dropped it.”¹⁹ Emerson could not help but feel that Frost was imprisoned in an immature phase of belief that he had himself outgrown. Part of the extraordinary vehemence of his reaction to Frost’s theology may well have stemmed from the fact that he was condemning a part of his earlier self. In religion it sometimes happens that the intensest reaction occurs when the convert is confronted by those whom he has left behind.

III.

In December, 1837, and January, 1838, Emerson was busy preparing and delivering a series of lectures in Boston on “Human Culture.” Evidently he wanted to clear his schedule of competing obligations; for, on November 16, he wrote to William Silsbee, asking him to take the East Lexington pulpit for eight to ten Sabbaths, beginning the first Sunday in December. His concentration on his lectures seems to have kept him home on Sundays, for there is only one reference to preaching in that period in the Journals. On December 3, Emerson’s half-uncle, Samuel Ripley, preached in Concord. Curiously enough, this was the day when Mrs. Emerson remarked that “it is wicked to go to church Sundays.” Emerson’s reaction was more favorable. “Sunday I could not help remarking at church how much humanity was in the preaching of my good uncle, Mr R. The rough farmers had their hands at their eyes repeatedly. But the old hardened sinners, the arid educated men, ministers & others, were dry as stones.”²⁰

In February, 1838, the lectures at last over, there remained “a harvest of small works to be done which were adjourned to this day.” But there was also a major decision to be reached. For something like two years, Emerson had served as stated supply at East Lexington. On February 18, he told the committee there

¹⁹ Miles, *Sermon at the Burial of Barzillai Frost*, 6.

²⁰ Rusk, *Letters*, II, 103; Emerson, *Journals*, IV, 377, 379. Compare *Works*, I, 143. In the printed *Journals*, the paragraph beginning “Whilst meditating on the ideal” is incorrectly dated December 8 instead of December 3. In the manuscript *Journal*, the name of Emerson’s uncle has been expanded at a later date to read: Mr S. Ripley.

that he wished to put off his charge, and he recommended John Sullivan Dwight as his successor. The committee assented, even though the term of his engagement still had time left to run, provided he would take on himself the responsibility for securing Dwight's services.²¹

Emerson's decision was more than a farewell to East Lexington; it was actually the cutting of the last thread that bound him "to that prized gown & band the symbols black & white of old & distant Judah." This decision had been a long time in the making. Ever since graduation from Harvard in 1821, he had been involved in a quest for an appropriate calling. The ministry had originally attracted him because of his "passionate love for the strains of eloquence." He thought of the sermon as an appropriate vehicle for the inspired utterance of which he regarded himself capable: "The office of a clergyman is twofold; public preaching & private influence. Entire success in the first is the lot of few, but this I am encouraged to expect." When he relinquished the charge of the Second Church in 1832, he was prompted by complex and partly-obscure motives; but involved in the decision was undoubtedly his distaste for pastoral duties. After his return from Europe, he welcomed opportunities for occasional preaching, since he could pursue the part of the calling of the minister that appealed to him and avoid the pastoral duties that were uncongenial.²²

Preaching was a more restrictive mode of utterance than lecturing, however, and it was doubtless with relief that he found that his growing reputation as a lecturer would permit him to abandon the pulpit altogether. To his mother he wrote: "But henceforth perhaps I shall live by lecturing which promises to be good bread. I have relinquished my ecclesiastical charge at E Lexington & shall not preach more except from the Lyceum." The lecture platform offered all the advantages of the pulpit in heightened degree, with none of the disadvantages: "Here he may lay himself out utterly, large, enormous, prodigal, on the subject of the hour. Here he may dare to hope for ecstasy & eloquence."²³

²¹ Rusk, *Letters*, II, 108, 113.

²² Rusk, *Letters*, II, 114; *Journals*, I, 363. See also Henry Nash Smith, "Emerson's Problem of Vocation," *New England Quarterly*, XII (1939), 52-67; and Stephen E. Whicher, *Freedom and Fate* (Philadelphia, 1953).

²³ Rusk, *Letters*, II, 120; *Journals*, V, 280-281.

Emerson's last Sunday at East Lexington was March 25; and while he preached on three other occasions in 1838, at New York, Waltham, and Watertown, his departure from East Lexington was really the end of his career as a minister. As a kind of gesture of defiance, on March 25 and the later occasions when he did preach, a large part of the sermon was made up of extracts from the Boston lecture on religion, so that his pulpit utterances at the end became more explicitly and uncompromisingly transcendental than they had ever been before.²⁴

The final break with the calling to which he had been consecrated was not an easy one. That he was distinctly upset by the decision, even though he was confident it was the right one, is apparent from the Journals. It seems to be no mere coincidence that it was in March, 1838, after he had sought release from East Lexington and before his final appearance in the pulpit there, that his castigation of the churches and of Frost's preaching became most severe. At such a time, he was not a reporter, objectively appraising the state of organized religion. He was a man arguing with himself, trying to be reassured that the blame for his action lay not within him, but with society. For his own peace of mind, he had to persuade himself that it was the world that had failed, and not Ralph Waldo Emerson.

On Sunday, March 4, he warned: "Let the clergy beware when the well disposed scholar begins to say, 'I cannot go to church, time is too precious.'" On Sunday, March 18, a stormy, snowy day, the very length of the Journal entry is a clue to the emotional turmoil which he concealed beneath a serene exterior:

At Church all day but almost tempted to say I would go no more. Men go where they are wont to go else had no soul gone this afternoon

²⁴ The manuscript "Preaching Record" shows that Emerson preached in 1838 and 1839 as follows: Feb. 4, 1838, Concord; Feb. 11, Concord; Feb. 18, E. Lexington; Feb. 25, E. Lexington; March 25, E. Lexington (Sermons 154, "Duty," and 87, "Self-Culture," enlarged by lecture on religion); April 5, Fast Day at E. Lexington and Concord ("Peace Lecture"); April 8, New York (Sermons 154 and 87 enlarged); April 29, Waltham (Sermons 37 and 87 enlarged); Aug. 15, Watertown (Sermons 154 and 87 enlarged); Jan. 13, 1839, Concord (Sermons 101 and 87 enlarged); Jan. 20, Concord (Sermon 169). January 20, 1839 is the last entry in the "Preaching Record." Several of these sermons, preached at the close of Emerson's pulpit activity, are among those reprinted in McGiffert, *Young Emerson Speaks*.

The snowstorm was real the preacher merely spectral. Vast contrast to look at him & then out of the window. Yet no fault in the good man. Evidently he thought himself a faithful searching preacher, mentioned that he thought so several times; & seemed to be one of that large class, *sincere persons based on shams; sincere persons who are bred & do live in shams*. He had lived in vain. He had no one word intimating that ever he had laughed or wept, was married or enamoured, had been cheated, or voted for, or chagrined. If he had ever lived & acted we were none the wiser for it. It seemed strange they should come to Church. It seemed as if their own houses were very unentertaining that they should prefer this thoughtless clamorous young person. . . .

There is no better subject for effective writing than the Clergy. I ought to sit & think & then write a discourse to the American clergy showing them the ugliness & unprofitableness of theology & churches at this day & the glory & sweetness of the moral nature out of whose pale they are almost wholly shut. . . .

The men I have spoke of above — sincere persons who live in shams, are those who accept another man's consciousness for their own, & are in the state of a son who should always suck at his mothers teat. I think Swedenborg ought so to represent them or still more properly, as permanent embryos which received all their nourishment through the umbilical cord & never arrived at a conscious & independent existence.

Once leave your own knowledge of God, your own sentiment, & take a secondary knowledge, as St Paul's, or George Fox's, or Swedenborg's, and you get wider from God with every year this secondary form lasts; & if, as now, eighteen centuries; why, the chasm yawns to that breadth that men can scarcely be convinced there is in them anything divine.²⁵

No doubt, through all this period of Emerson's inner struggle, Barzillai Frost was wholly ignorant of what was going on. He was of course not one to whom Emerson would turn directly for spiritual comfort. Yet in a curious inverted way, and quite unaware of the fact, Frost was in a position to give Emerson precisely what he wanted. Emerson had to believe that the institutions of religion and the calling of the ministry, to which he had once been dedicated, no longer deserved his support. Frost's deficiencies as a preacher made it easy for Emerson to persuade himself that the churches generally were in decay. One wonders, however, how he would have solved his problem had the pulpit in Concord been

²⁵ Journals, IV, 402, 412-413; compare Works, I, 137-139, 145.

occupied by a minister more conspicuously gifted in pulpit utterance. One wonders what kind of a Divinity School Address there would have been had Barzillai Frost possessed some of the eloquence of his beloved teacher, Henry Ware, Jr.

IV.

By a strange quirk of fate, it was just at this juncture that Emerson received a letter from a committee of the Senior Class of the Divinity School in Cambridge. They desired him to deliver before them, the following July, "the customary discourse, on occasion of their entering upon the active Christian ministry." They thought of him as still a clergyman, and so addressed him as "Rev. R. W. Emerson." Curiously enough, in his reply to them, he did not reject that identification with the calling of the ministry, but rather explicitly accepted it: "In the good hope of our calling," he wrote, "I am your friend and servant . . ." ²⁶

Emerson might well have regarded this invitation as providential, offering as it did an outlet for all the festering irritations that had thus far been confined to the Journals. But July 15 was almost four months away; and even before that date arrived, his mood had begun to change. He continued to condemn bad preaching — though not always Frost's preaching — and he continued to comment on the decaying state of religion and the churches. The note of personal involvement diminished, however. A nagging doubt appeared: if the church is dead, why is it that so many good people seem unaware of the fact? The stormy, snowy Sunday of March 18, then, was the final climax of Emerson's crisis of vocation. July 15, seen in the context of this problem, brought public proclamation in disguised form of his conviction that he did not belong in the ministry, because that calling did not allow scope for his special talents and ambitions.

Meanwhile, there were more Sundays at church, and new occasions to consider the great themes of religion. On Sunday, April 1,

²⁶ For the letter from the committee to Emerson, see Rusk, *Letters*, II, 147. Rusk does not list Emerson's reply, but it was copied into "The Records of the Theological School" (the "Student History"), MS, Andover-Harvard Library. In later years, Emerson took pains to reject the title of "Reverend" when correspondents mistakenly used it. See Rusk, *Letters*, IV, 115, 173; V, 183.

Emerson was in Cambridge, discussing Theism with some of the theological students. He had been doubtful about the venture, but it turned out far better than he had expected. Later that week, he went to New York, where he preached, on April 8, two of his transcendentalized sermons in Orville Dewey's church. On April 22, he was at a teachers' meeting of the Sunday School, that Frost very likely attended also, at which the question of miracles was broached. Emerson's position was, of course, that Jesus needs no miracles to attest his divine origin. "Well then he must have credentials & miracle is the Credentials. I answer God sends me messengers alway. I am surrounded by messengers of God who show me credentials day by day."²⁷

On Friday, May 18, Emerson evidently encountered Frost making the rounds of his parish. Emerson himself had never enjoyed the routine of parish calling, and he felt no special need of a visit in the traditional manner from the local minister. So far as he could see, Frost was simply imitating men like Dr. Charles Lowell and Henry Ware, Jr., who had won for themselves extraordinary reputations as parish ministers. He thereby doomed himself to mediocrity.

The young preacher comes to his parish & learns there are 300 families which he must visit each once in a year. In stead of groping to get exactly the old threads of relation to bind him to the people that bound his venerable predecessor, let him quit all leather & twine let him so highly & gladly entertain his most poetic & exhilarating office as to cast all this nonsense of false expectation & drivelling Chinese secondariness behind him, & acquaint them at first hand with Deity.²⁸

The real duty of the minister, Emerson insisted, is prophetic utterance, not parish calling:

Let him not be anxious to get out to see in civil sort his 300 families with tablebook to know the times how oft & when. Perhaps it is mere folly for him to visit one. But let him when he meets one of these men or women be to them divine man be to them thought & virtue let their timid aspirations find in him a friend let their trampled instincts be genially tempted out in the mellow atmosphere of his society, let their doubts know that he hath doubted and their wonder feel that he has

²⁷ Journals, IV, 420, 423, 427-429.

²⁸ Ibid., IV, 454-455; compare Works, I, 146.

wondered. . . . Discharge to them the priestly office, & absent or present you shall be followed with their veneration & grappled to them by love.²⁹

The entry for Sunday, May 27, presents a problem in identification.³⁰ "Nettled again & nervous (as much as sometimes by flatulency or piddling things)," Emerson wrote, "by the wretched Sundays preaching of Mr H." Evidently Frost was not the only preacher who rubbed him the wrong way. Of the Cambridge men with the appropriate initial, the most plausible candidate would be Frederic Henry Hedge, who was down from Bangor on a visit at about that time, as was his custom every year in May. Whoever it was, he "droned & droned & wound his stertorous horn upon the main doctrine of Xty the resurrection, namely, & how little it was remembered in modern preaching, & modern prayers. . . ." ³¹

Late in May, Dr. Ripley suffered an ill turn, but he recovered enough to preach on Sunday, June 17. Emerson ordinarily respected the venerable minister, even though he tended to look upon him as a quaint survival of a bygone age. On occasion, he had contrasted him favorably with the Biblical critics from Cambridge: "Homely & dry his things are because they are traditions accepted for nature. . . . But you do not feel cheated & empty as when fed by the grammarians." This time, however, Emerson ridiculed the way in which, at the morning service, Ripley identified the sick and bereaved in his prayers by enumerating "all the degrees of kin selecting & specifying each with botanical precision." In the afternoon, the comment on the half-blind preacher, then in his eighty-eighth year, was even less charitable: "This afternoon, the foolishlest preaching — which bayed at the moon.

²⁹ Journals, IV, 455; compare Works, I, 146-147.

³⁰ The manuscript as well as the printed Journals date this entry May 26. For about three weeks, Emerson was mistaken as to the date. The entry describing "our pretty country church music" is given in the manuscript under date of June 9, instead of June 10; and the pages beginning with the entry on Napoleon and means and ends are dated "16 June, Sunday" instead of June 17. By the following Saturday, June 23, he was back on the right calendar again. See Journals, IV, 457, 468, 477, 491.

³¹ Journals, IV, 457. Hedge was one of Emerson's close friends, yet Emerson somehow felt that "there is always a fence betwixt us." See Rusk, Letters, II, 270; III, 53.

Go, hush, old man, whom years have taught no truth. . . . Such Moabitish darkness, well typified in the perplexity about his glasses, reminded one of the squashbugs who stupid stare at you when you lift the rotten leaf of the vines."³²

On Sunday, June 24, the Journal entry is far mellower at the beginning than at the end, as though the morning service had been more satisfactory than the afternoon one. There is no clue, however, to the identity of the preacher or preachers. In the morning, Emerson even discerned "poetry concealed in all the common-places of prayer 'Searcher of Hearts' &c"; and he described the "softness & peace, the benignant humanity that hovers over our assembly when it sits down in the morning service in Church. . . ." By afternoon, the familiar contrast between traditional religion and spontaneous faith had reasserted itself with its usual vigor:

The faith should blend with the light of rising & of setting suns, with the flying cloud, the blooming clover, & the breath of flowers; But now the Sabbath, the priest's Sabbath has long lost the splendor of nature, it is unlovely, we are glad when it is done, we can make, we do make, even in the presence of his, a far better, holier, sweeter, for ourselves.³³

V.

On July 1, Emerson was once again in his pew both morning and afternoon, but got little enough from the experience. Preachers should be informed, he felt, that Sunday is the only time some of their parishioners have for thought; and so "do not defraud them of that, as miserably as two men have me today."³⁴ By this time, the appointed day for the address to the students in Cambridge was only a fortnight away; and Emerson, hard at work on his manuscript, was intolerant of distractions. Even the Journal tended to be neglected, and the frequency and length of the entries dropped off as he applied himself to the task at hand.

The first part of the Divinity School Address seems to have been freshly composed for the occasion. To be sure, it follows a pattern

³² Journals, IV, 234, 478, 480-81.

³³ Journals, IV, 494, 496; compare Works, I, 137, 139.

³⁴ Journals, V, 4.

of ideas that Emerson had used before. The sermon on "Summer," composed in 1829 and preached as recently as 1837, also begins with a poetic description of nature which leads to the discovery of God (or a divine mind) which is the underlying and everpresent reality.³⁵ But none of the actual phrasing of the Address was taken from that sermon; nor did Emerson borrow from the transcendental lecture on religion that he had been using recently whenever he was asked to preach.

As soon as Emerson began to discuss "the famine of our churches," however, he turned to his Journals. For over a year, he had been complaining to himself about Barzillai Frost, who preached so badly and thought parish calling so important. These passages needed almost no alteration to serve his purpose. Some of the changes he made were stylistic. Where once he had written: "the flying cloud, the blooming clover, & the breath of flowers," he now substituted: "the flying cloud, the singing bird, and the breath of flowers"; for he had already used "the blowing clover" in another passage. Some of the alterations were in the interest of propriety; this address was hardly the occasion to refer to the local clergy as "permanent embryos," still receiving nourishment through the umbilical cord. Other deletions were made to avoid specific mention of particular individuals, like Dr. Lowell and Dr. Ware.³⁶

Such emendations were not made simply to avoid embarrassment to local worthies. Emerson's avowed purpose was to "convert life into truth," to perceive the general truth in the particular event. His method was commonly the substitution of generalized expressions for specific names and episodes. The result is often no more than a stylistic device, in which the general statement is a transparent cloak for the event that occasioned it. The alert reader then has little difficulty in converting truth back into life, into the biography of the author.

Hence the Divinity School Address may be read on two levels. Its manifest content is the enduring message that the life of religion must be recreated anew in the souls of each successive generation of men. Its hidden meaning is an apology for casting

³⁵ McGiffert, *Young Emerson Speaks*, 39-45, 265.

³⁶ *Journals*, IV, 454; *Works*, I, 137, 145.

aside the prized gown and band, and an assertion that society — symbolized here by Barzillai Frost — was responsible for the outcome. Almost every word of the crucial paragraph beginning: "Whenever the pulpit is usurped by a formalist," was inspired by Frost, and most of it can be traced to March 18, 1838, when Emerson's inner turmoil over his crisis of vocation was the greatest.

Evidently, Emerson's generalizations represent less reliable evidence than has usually been supposed as to the condition of religion and the churches at that day. No one would ever guess, from reading his comments, that the Divinity School in Cambridge in the 1830's was an institution of extraordinary vitality; that it was exploring new fields of Biblical scholarship; that it was alive to all sorts of social issues; that some of the most promising young men of the region were enrolled as students; and that a very high proportion of them went on to distinguished careers in a variety of professions, including the parish ministry.³⁷ And Emerson's oft-quoted phrase, "the pale negations of Boston Unitarianism," tells us a good deal about his standard of values; but it is hardly the final word on the religion of William Ellery Channing, Henry Ware, Jr., or even Andrews Norton.

Despite Emerson's ruthless criticisms of Frost, he bore him no personal ill-will or animosity. Emerson had come to regard Frost as representative of the clergy of the day, and in criticizing him, the intent was to condemn the type of which he served as symbol. Yet the fact remains that Emerson's judgment of the clergy at large was deeply colored by his experience of the one man who was generally recognized as unsuccessful in the pulpit.

Emerson himself must have realized that the opinion of a man in his position might be clouded by personal interest, for he made a conscious attempt to avoid bias. But by July 8, he felt that he had passed beyond any personal involvement in the problem he was discussing:

But when I have as clear a sense as now that I am speaking simple truth without any bias, any foreign interest in the matter, — all railing, all unwillingness to hear, all danger of injury to the conscience,

³⁷ See my chapter in G. H. Williams, ed., *The Harvard Divinity School* (Boston, 1954).

dwindles & disappears. I refer to the discourse now growing under my eye to the Divinity School.

His mission, he told himself, would be legitimate only if he were able to achieve an attitude of entire detachment: "In preparing to go to Cambridge with my speech to the young men . . . it occurred with force that I had no right to go unless I were equally willing to be prevented from going."³⁸

VI.

Where was Barzillai Frost on the evening of July 15? For the sake of dramatic fitness, he should have been in the little chapel of Divinity Hall in Cambridge; but there is no evidence that he was there, and the probabilities are strong that he was not. We have testimony as to the presence of Henry Ware, Jr., and Dean Palfrey, of Elizabeth Peabody, Theodore Parker, and Cyrus Bartol. But regarding the minister from Concord, the record is silent.

For two weeks, while Emerson was completing the manuscript of his address, Frost had been occupied with a chore that has heretofore been his sole claim to remembrance. On June 25, 1838, the "immediate government" of Harvard College took note of the case of a member of the senior class who had been all too frequently absent from both prayers and recitations. The culprit was James Russell Lowell, a son of the Reverend Charles Lowell, whose classmates had just elected him class poet. The action of the Faculty was precipitated by an unfortunate incident at evening prayers, when Lowell, who had spent the day celebrating his election, arose in his seat and bowed ceremoniously and low to the congregation, first on his right hand and then on his left. The Faculty voted "that Lowell, senior, . . . be suspended till the Saturday before Commencement, to pursue his studies with Mr. Frost of Concord, to recite to him twice a day, reviewing the whole of Locke's 'Essay' and studying also Mackintosh's 'Review of Ethical Philosophy,' to be examined in both on his return, and not to visit Cambridge during the period of his suspension."³⁹

³⁸ Journals, V, 7, 9-10.

³⁹ Ferris Greenslet, James Russell Lowell (Boston, 1905), 23; T. W. Higginson,

Young Lowell did not relish his rustication "up here at this infernal Concord"; but the experience was not a total loss. He enjoyed long walks, sometimes alone in the moonlight, sometimes to the cliffs with Mr. Emerson. He attended sociables, flirted with Caroline Brooks, and wrote sentimental verses in praise of her black eyes, pretty smile, and gentle heart. She ran in his head and heart, he acknowledged, "more than she has any right to"; but it was well understood that Rockwood Hoar had the inside track, so Lowell stood aside.⁴⁰

If Lowell was forbidden to go to Cambridge to see his friends, there was nothing to prevent them from visiting him in exile. The Frosts were unfailingly hospitable, and put them up overnight. "Our ride from C. was exceedingly pleasant, after the shower and Mr F's hospitality," Nathan Hale wrote to his classmate. The one thing he did find to criticize about "the *permaxime* hospitable Bar" was that "his *bed is too soft* for this *hot weather*." He proposed to arrange for Frost to preach at Andover on exchange. "and give him a taste of the delights of feathers. and ther. 90° in the shade —." ⁴¹

The Frosts had been married for just over a year, and Mrs. Frost had the care of a two-months-old baby; but she still found time to think of Lowell's comfort. "I hope you will find your hostess a 'good sort of woman' and a fine housekeeper as I hear she is," Hale had written; "to say nothing of finding her a pleasant and intelligent lady." Lowell readily assented. "Mrs. Frost is simply the best woman I ever set my eyes on," he wrote back. "Always pleasant, always striving to make me happy and comfortable, and always with a sweet smile, a very sweet smile! She is a jewel! Then, too, I love her all the better for that she loves that husband of hers, and she does love him and cherish him." He would marry her "as a reward for so much virtue," were she not already married, and old enough to be his mother, or at any

Old Cambridge (New York, 1899), 156-157; E. E. Hale, James Russell Lowell and His Friends (Boston, 1899), 42.

⁴⁰ Lowell to G. B. Loring, July 8, 1838, MS, Harvard College Library, also in C. E. Norton, ed., Letters of James Russell Lowell (Boston, 1904), I, 28; H. E. Scudder, James Russell Lowell (Boston, 1901), I, 54; Moorfield Storey and Edward W. Emerson, Ebenezer Rockwood Hoar (Boston, 1911), 30-32.

⁴¹ Nathan Hale, Jr., to Lowell, July 9, 1838, MS, Harvard College Library.

rate, his eldest sister. "That woman has really reconciled me to Concord." ⁴²

With Frost himself, Lowell got on at least amicably. "I shall do my best to please Mr. F.," he wrote soon after his arrival, "since I find he does his best to please me & make me comfortable." As time went on, however, he found out how best to exploit his tutor's weaknesses. Though an admirer of Locke, Frost did not hesitate on occasion to take exception to minor parts of the Lockean philosophy. Lowell would stoutly defend the philosopher and needle Frost into an extended digression which would take up three quarters of the allotted time. "The man's cardinal fault is that he delights to hear the sound of his own voice," Lowell complained. Sooner or later, Frost would stumble into a particularly flimsy argument, whereupon Lowell would burst out "with greater fury for having been pent up so long, like a simmering volcano." ⁴³

On Sundays, Lowell went to church. One day, his tutor referred in the sermon to Niagara Falls, " 'Where,' he said, 'a vast body of water nearly *half a mile wide & several feet deep*, urged on by the superincumbent weight of lakes, plunges as it were into the middle of the Earth.' ! ! ! ! That's literal." This excerpt may well represent Barzillai Frost's preaching at its worst; but there is no escape from the universal testimony: pulpit utterance was not his great gift. ⁴⁴

VII.

The storm of reproach that burst over Emerson following his address came as a surprise to him. He met the attacks with outward serenity and refused to be drawn into controversy; yet, as Stephen Whicher has pointed out, inwardly he was decidedly upset. He received a sudden reminder that the world of fact might not yield to his assertion of the ideal; that however eloquently he might proclaim the mountains to be moving, they still stood fast. "The reception of the *Address*," Professor Whicher has said,

⁴² Hale to Lowell, June 29, 1838, Harvard College Library; see also Hale, James Russell Lowell, 47. Frost was married on June 1, 1837, in Framingham to Miss Elmira Stone of that town; see Yeoman's Gazette, June 3, 1837.

⁴³ Lowell to G. B. Loring, July 1, 1838, Harvard College Library; also Scudder, Lowell, I, 51-52; Hale, Lowell, 46.

⁴⁴ Hale, Lowell, 45.

"was an angular intrusion of fact into the smooth world of his thoughts, which, while rousing him to an unprecedented vigor of defiance, helped to undermine in the long run his capacity to identify the ideal and the real."⁴⁵

If the Address thus proved crucial in the inward and cosmic drama of Emerson's ideas, it also was a turning-point in the outward and parochial matter of his relationship with Barzillai Frost. While Emerson's antipathy to Frost from mid-1837 to mid-1838 was directed at Frost the symbol rather than at Frost the man, it was nonetheless real. But once Emerson had solved the problem of his relationship to the profession of which Frost was the symbol, he was able to confront Frost the man with composure. It was no longer necessary for him to suffer through Frost's sermons in order to reassure himself that the church was tottering to its fall, so he worshipped instead in the woods and fields. He could then meet Frost in other relationships without being aroused to condemnation, so that their contacts, though never intimate, were wholly friendly.

In the months following the address, Emerson attended church less and less often. He had previously gone regularly, except when he was off preaching himself, or when he was preparing lectures under pressure. The evidence in the Journals is admittedly meager, but it is fairly clear that by the fall of 1839, he had given up Sunday churchgoing almost entirely. Furthermore, between July, 1838, and September, 1839, while he sometimes commented on bad preaching, he did so less often, more briefly, and with far less emotional intensity than he had previously been wont to do.

Emerson was in church on Sunday, August 19, 1838, when Dr. Ripley preached, and again a week later. On September 16, he had a good word for poor Barzillai Frost: "Mr Frost said very happily in today's sermon, 'We see God in nature as we see the soul of our friend in his countenance.'" On January 6, 1839, he was present when Communion was celebrated. On March 3, the singing pleased him; but on March 10, when he went to both morning and afternoon services, he charged the church "with a want of respect to the soul of the worshipper." He liked the silent church before the service, he said, better than any preaching.

⁴⁵ Whicher, *Freedom and Fate*, 73.

On April 7, he heard the sermon that he afterwards condemned in the essay on "Compensation"; but the record does not show whether Frost was the guilty preacher. On May 12, he commented: "All or almost all that I hear at Church is mythological"; and on the following Sunday, he repeated that charge that the preacher was not dealing with real life: "Cease, O thou unauthorized talker, to prate of consolation, & resignation, and spiritual joys, in neat & balanced sentences." ⁴⁶

The last clear reference in the Journals to churchgoing at Concord occurs in September, 1839. "I love the Sunday morning," he wrote on Saturday, September 28. "I hail it from afar. I wake with gladness & a holiday feeling always on that day. The Church is ever my desk. If I did not go thither I should not write so many of these wayward pages." The next day found him in church, where he praised the singing and criticized Frost — "O thou hoarse preacher" — for exhorting, and preaching cant. In the months that followed, he may have gone to church a few times, for there are one or two ambiguous entries in the Journals, but his churchgoing was essentially a thing of the past. When pleasant weather came in the spring of 1840, a suggestion of Sunday morning walks appears: "We can never see Christianity from Christendom but from the pastures, from a boat in the pond, from the song of a starling, we possibly may." ⁴⁷

Other members of the Emerson family continued to go to church, and Emerson never discouraged them from going. "He was glad to have us go to church," his son recalled. "His own attitude in the matter was, that it was only a question for each person where the best church was, — in the solitary wood, the chamber, the talk with the serious friend, or in hearing the preacher." He did not actually resign his membership in the First Parish until 1852, and he continued after that date to pay the equivalent of his parish tax as a voluntary contribution. ⁴⁸

While Frost never became intimate with his parishioner, the two men were on friendly terms. In June, 1839, Frost was the spokesman for a group of Concord citizens who made a present of

⁴⁶ Journals, V, 20, 28, 45, 160, 167, 171, 173, 180-182, 197, 200.

⁴⁷ Journals, V, 265, 269, 271, 407.

⁴⁸ Edward Waldo Emerson, *Emerson in Concord* (Boston, 1889), 169; Rusk, *Letters*, IV, 289, 326, 339.

books to Emerson "as a slight expression of the worth of your lectures to themselves & families." In 1841, Emerson sent Frost a copy of the *Essays*, which Frost acknowledged in a letter written in the mannered and formal style of the day. In 1842, it was Emerson who took Frost to call on Hawthorne; but Hawthorne had even less respect for the clergy than Emerson. "He is a good sort of hum-drum parson enough," he recorded in his *Notebooks*, "and well fitted to increase the stock of manuscript sermons, of which there must be a fearful quantity already in the world." In 1847, Frost received a copy of Emerson's poems, which struck him as a higher expression of the author's mind than anything he had previously published. For several years, too, Emerson and Frost were two of the three curators of the Concord Lyceum, and jointly made arrangements for the winter schedule of speakers.⁴⁹

Frost served as minister in Concord for twenty years. Apart from the preaching, his ministry there was successful, though not entirely free from disagreements within the parish. He was still in his early fifties, however, when his health began to fail, and he was obliged to seek a warmer climate during the coldest months of the year. He spent several weeks at St. Thomas and Santa Cruz in February and March, 1856, and returned there the following winter. It became apparent in the fall of 1857 that his recovery was very doubtful, and so he resigned his pastorate on October 3. The winter of 1857-58, spent at Fayal in the Azores, proved to be a tragic one. The state of his health continually worsened; but even that shadow was obliterated by the accidental death of his younger son, aged ten, who fell from a cliff and died after more than two days of intense suffering. (Two daughters had previously died in infancy.) The Frosts returned to Concord, where death came on December 8, 1858.⁵⁰

⁴⁹ Frost to Emerson, June, 1839, MS, Harvard College Library, summarized in Rusk, *Letters*, II, 207n-208n; Frost to Emerson, April 17, 1841, Harvard College Library; Nathaniel Hawthorne, *The American Notebooks*, ed. Randall Stewart (New Haven, 1932), 165; Frost to Emerson, Jan. 5, 1847, Harvard College Library; Rusk, *Letters*, IV, 125, 405, 426.

⁵⁰ Miles, *Sermon at the Burial of Barzillai Frost*, 17-22; *Memoirs of Members of the Social Circle in Concord*, 56-58. Frost's will, signed on Feb. 4, 1856, was witnessed by Samuel Hoar, John Thoreau (the father), and Henry D. Thoreau.

In his twilight years, Emerson once more began to attend church on Sundays. By that time, Grindall Reynolds had been minister for a dozen years or more, and the image of Barzillai Frost was fast fading away.⁵¹

⁵¹ E.W. Emerson, *Emerson in Concord*, 191.

SUMERIAN THEOLOGY AND ETHICS

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THE SUMERIANS failed to develop a systematic philosophy in the accepted sense of the word. In particular it never occurred to them to raise any questions concerning the fundamental nature of reality and knowledge, and therefore they evolved practically nothing corresponding to the philosophical subdivisions commonly known as metaphysics and epistemology. They did, however, speculate on the nature and, more particularly, the origin of the universe, as well as on its method of operation. And there is good reason to infer that in the course of the third millennium B.C. there emerged a group of Sumerian thinkers and teachers who, in the course of their quest for satisfactory answers to some of the problems raised by their cosmic speculations, evolved a systematic cosmology and theology carrying such high intellectual conviction that they became the basic creed and dogma of much of the ancient Near East.

Unfortunately for us these cosmological ideas and theological speculations are nowhere explicitly formulated in philosophical terms and systematic statements. For our ancient Sumerian philosophers had failed to discover that all-important intellectual tool which we take more or less for granted: the scientific method of definition and generalization, without which our present day science would never have reached its acknowledged prominence. To take even so relatively simple a principle as cause and effect, while fully aware of the innumerable concrete examples of its operation, the Sumerian thinker never came upon the idea of formulating it as a general, all-pervading law. Almost all our information concerning Sumerian philosophy and theology, cosmology, and cosmogony, has to be ferreted out and pieced together from the Sumerian literary works, particularly their myths, epic tales, and hymns, and this is a complicated task which permits considerable difference of opinion.¹

¹ Cf. especially my detailed review of Frankfort, Wilson, Jacobsen, and Irwin's

First, then, what were some of the "scientific" data at their disposal which underpinned their assumptions and led to the narrowing down of their philosophical speculations to theological certainties? In the eyes of the Sumerian teachers and sages, the major components of the universe in the more narrow sense of the word were heaven and earth; indeed their term for universe was *an-ki*,

"Intellectual Adventure of Ancient Man" (1946) in JCS (Journal of Cuneiform Studies), 2, pp. 39-70. This divergence of views results not so much from differences in translation and interpretation of the texts themselves, as from opposing psychological appraisals of the minds of the ancients. Because our primary source material for Sumerian philosophy and theology are myths rather than philosophic essays, scholars tended to confuse the metaphysician with the theologian, though by and large they are poles apart psychologically and temperamentally. The mythographers were scribes and poets whose main concern was the glorification and exaltation of the gods and their deeds. Unlike the philosophers they were not interested in discovering cosmological and theological truths; they accepted the current theological notions and practices without worrying about their origin and development. The aim of the myth makers was to compose a narrative poem in an effort to explain one or another of these notions and practices in a manner that would be appealing, inspiring, and entertaining. They were not concerned primarily with proofs and arguments directed to the intellect; their first interest was in telling a story that would appeal primarily to the emotions. Their main literary tools, therefore, were not logic and reason, but imagination and fantasy. In telling their story, these poets did not hesitate to invent motives and incidents patterned on human action which could not possibly have any basis in reasonable and speculative thought, nor did they hesitate to adopt legendary and folkloristic motifs that had nothing to do with rational cosmological inquiry and inference.

It was this failure to distinguish between the Sumerian mythographer and philosopher which confused some of the modern students of ancient Oriental thought and led them to both under- and overestimate the minds of the ancients. On the one hand, they argued, the ancients were mentally incapable of thinking logically and reflecting intelligently on cosmic problems. On the other hand they were blessed with an intellectually "unspoiled" mythopoetic mind, which was somehow naturally profound and intuitive and which could therefore penetrate cosmic truths far more perceptively than the modern mind with its analytic and intellectual approach. Which, by and large, is just stuff and nonsense. The more mature and reflective Sumerian thinker had the inherent mental capacity of thinking logically and coherently on any problem, including those concerned with the origin and operation of the universe. His stumbling-block was the dearth of scientific data at his disposal. Moreover he lacked such fundamental intellectual tools as definitions and generalizations, and had practically no insight into the processes of growth and development, since the principle of evolution which seems so obvious now that it has been discovered, was entirely unknown to him. Just so, no doubt, in some future day, with the continued accumulation of new data and the discovery of hitherto undreamt of intellectual tools and perspectives, the limitations and shortcomings of the philosophers and scientists of our own day will become apparent. There is this significant difference, however: modern thinking man is usually prepared to admit the relative character of his conclusions and is sceptical of all absolute answers. Not so the Sumerian thinker; he was no doubt convinced that he had the truth "by the tail," and that he knew exactly how the universe was created and operated.

a compound word meaning "heaven-earth." The earth was a flat disk consisting of a vast hollow space enclosed top and bottom by a solid surface in the shape of a vault. Just what this heavenly solid was thought to be is still uncertain; to judge from the fact that the Sumerian term for tin is "metal of heaven," it may have been tin. Between heaven and earth they recognized a substance which they called *lil*, a word the approximate meaning of which is "wind, air, breath, spirit";² its most significant characteristics seem to be movement and expansion, and it therefore corresponds roughly to our "atmosphere." The sun, moon, planets, and stars were taken to be made of the same stuff as the atmosphere, but endowed, in addition, with the quality of luminosity.³ Surrounding the "heaven-earth" on all sides, as well as top and bottom was the boundless sea in which the universe somehow remained fixed and immovable.

From these basic facts concerning the structure of the universe, facts which seemed to the Sumerian thinkers obvious and indisputable, they evolved a cosmogony to fit. First, they concluded, was the primeval sea; the indications are that they looked upon the sea as a kind of "first cause" and "prime mover," and that they never asked themselves just what was prior to the sea in time and space. In this primeval sea was somehow engendered the universe, in the narrower sense of the word, the "heaven-earth," consisting of a vaulted heaven super-imposed over a flat earth and united with it. Between them, however, there came the moving and expanding "atmosphere" which separated heaven from earth. Out of this atmosphere were fashioned the luminous bodies, the moon, sun, planets, and stars. Following the separation of heaven and

² In short it has to a certain extent the semantic range of the Hebrew *ruach*.

³ For the origin and nature of the luminous bodies, moon, sun, planet, and star, there is practically no direct evidence at all. But from the fact that as far back as our written sources go, the Sumerian considered the moon-god, known by the two names, Sin and Nanna, to be the son of the air-god Enlil, it is not unreasonable to infer that they thought of the moon as a bright, air-like body which was fashioned in some way from the atmosphere. And since the sun-god Utu, and the Venus-goddess Inanna are always referred to in the texts as children of the moon-god, the probability is that these two luminous bodies were conceived as having been created from the moon after the latter had been fashioned from the atmosphere. This is also true of the remaining planets as well as the stars, which are described poetically as "the big ones who walk about (the moon) like wild oxen," and "the little ones who are scattered about (the moon) like grain."

earth and the creation of the light-giving astral bodies, plant, animal, and human life came into existence.⁴

Who now created this universe and kept it operating day in, day out, year in, year out, throughout eternity? From as far back as our written records go, the Sumerian theologian assumed as axiomatic the existence of a pantheon consisting of a group of living beings, man-like in form but superhuman and immortal, who, though invisible to mortal eye, guide and control the cosmos in accordance with well-laid plans and duly prescribed laws.⁵ Be it the great realms of heaven and earth, sea and air; be it the major astral bodies, sun, moon, and planet; be it such atmospheric forces as wind, storm, and tempest; and finally, to take the earth, such natural entities as river, mountain, and plain, or such cultural entities as city and state, dyke and ditch, field and farm, and even such implements as the pickax, brickmold, and plow — each was

⁴ For fuller details cf. my SM (*Sumerian Mythology*), pp. 30-75 and JCS, 2, pp. 43-44.

⁵ The Sumerian myths illustrate vividly the anthropomorphic character of the Sumerian gods: even the most powerful and most knowing among them were conceived as human in form, thought and deed. Like man they plan and act, eat and drink, marry and raise families, support large households and are addicted to human passions and weaknesses. By and large they prefer truth and justice to falsehood and oppression, but their motives are by no means clear, and man is often at a loss to understand them. They were thought to live on the "mountain of heaven and earth," "the place where the sun rose," at least presumably when their presence is not necessary in the particular cosmic entities over which they had charge. Just how they travelled is by no means certain from the available data; the sun-god in a chariot or, according to another version, by foot; the storm-god, on the clouds; other gods, by boat. But the Sumerian thinkers seem not to have troubled themselves too much with such "practical" and "realistic" problems. And so we are not informed just how the gods were supposed to arrive at their various temples and shrines in Sumer, and in what fashion they actually did perform such human activities as eating and drinking. The priests presumably saw of course only their statues, which they no doubt tended and handled with great care. But just how the stone, wooden and metal objects were to be conceived as having bone, muscle, and the breath of life — this kind of question never occurred to them. Nor did the Sumerian thinkers seem to be troubled by the inherent contradiction between immortality and anthropomorphism — although the gods were believed to be immortal, they nevertheless had to have their sustenance: could become sick to the point of death; fought, wounded, and killed, and presumably could themselves be wounded and killed. No doubt our Sumerian sages developed numerous theological notions in a futile attempt to resolve the inconsistencies and contradictions inherent in a polytheistic system of religion. But to judge from the available material they probably never wrote them down in systematic form and we will therefore never learn much about them. In any case it is hardly likely that they resolved many of the inconsistencies. What saved them from spiritual and intellectual frustration was no doubt the fact that many a question which, according to our way of thinking, should have troubled them, never came to their minds.

deemed to be under the charge of one or another anthropomorphic, but superhuman, being who guided its activities in accordance with established rules and regulations.⁶

How did this divine pantheon function? In the first place it seemed reasonable to the Sumerian thinker to assume that the deities constituting the pantheon were not all of the same importance or of equal rank. The god in charge of the pickax or brick-mold could hardly be expected to compare with the deity in charge of the sun. Nor could the deity in charge of dykes and ditches be expected to equal in rank the deity in charge of the earth as a whole. Then, too, on analogy with the political organization of the human state, it was natural to assume that at the head of the pantheon was a deity recognized by all the others as their king and ruler. The Sumerian pantheon was therefore conceived as functioning as an assembly with a king at its head, the most important groups in this assembly consisting of seven gods who "decree the fates" and of fifty deities known as "the great gods." But a more significant division set up by the Sumerian theologians within their pantheon is that between creative and non-creative deities, a notion arrived at as a result of their cosmological views. For according to these, the basic components of the cosmos are heaven and earth, sea and atmosphere; every other cosmic phenomenon could exist only within one or another of these realms. Hence it seemed reasonable to infer that the deities in control of heaven and earth, sea and air, were the creating gods and that one or another of these

⁶ Behind this axiomatic assumption of the Sumerian theologian no doubt lay a logical if perhaps unformulated inference, since he could hardly have seen any of the human-like beings with his own eyes. Our theologian took his cue from human society as he knew it, and reasoned of course from the known to the unknown. He noted that lands and cities, palaces and temples, fields and farms, in short all imaginable institutions and enterprises are tended and supervised, guided and controlled by living human beings; without them lands and cities become desolate, temples and palaces crumble, fields and farms turn to desert and wilderness. Surely, therefore, the cosmos and all its manifold phenomena must also be tended and supervised, guided and controlled by living beings in human form. But the cosmos, being far larger than the sum total of human habitations, and its organization being far more complex, these living beings must obviously be far stronger and ever so much more effective than ordinary humans. Above all they must be immortal; otherwise the cosmos would turn to chaos upon their death and the world would come to an end, alternatives which for obvious reasons did not recommend themselves to the Sumerian metaphysician. It was each of these invisible, anthropomorphic, but at the same time superhuman and immortal beings which the Sumerian designated by his word *dingir* and which we translate by the word "god."

four deities created every other cosmic entity in accordance with plans originating with them. Consequently the heaven-god An, the air-god Enlil, the water-god Enki, and the earth-goddess Ninhursag were treated as the four leading deities of the Sumerian pantheon, and are frequently grouped together as a quartette of deities in a class by themselves.⁷

As for the creating technique attributed to these deities, our Sumerian philosophers developed a doctrine which became dogma throughout the Near East, the doctrine of the creative power of the divine word. All that the creating deity had to do, according to this doctrine, was to lay his plans, utter the word, and pronounce the name. Similarly the Sumerian theologians adduced what was for them a satisfying metaphysical inference to explain what keeps the cosmic entities and cultural phenomena, once created, operating continuously and harmoniously, without conflict and confusion; this is the concept designated by the Sumerian word *me*, the exact meaning of which is still uncertain. In general it would seem to denote a set of rules and regulations assigned to each cosmic entity and cultural phenomenon for the very purpose of keeping it operating forever in accordance with the plans laid down by the deities creating it.⁸

But to return to the gods. In the course of the third millennium, we find that there existed among the Sumerians, at least by name, hundreds of deities. We know the names of many of these, not merely from lists compiled in the schools but also from lists of

⁷ Cf. especially Arno Poebel in his "Historical Texts" (Publications of the Babylonian Section of the University Museum, IV, part 1), p. 24 ff. and JCS, 2, pp. 47-48, note 16.

⁸ In short, another superficial but evidently not altogether ineffective answer to the insoluble cosmological problems, which merely hid the fundamental difficulties from view with the help of largely meaningless words. In the case of the *me*'s governing man and his culture, we actually have considerable direct evidence of their supposed number and character. For fortunately for us, one of the ancient Sumerian poets, in the course of comparing or redacting one of his myths, found it desirable to actually list all these cultural *me*'s. He therefore divided civilization as he knew it into over one hundred elements. Unfortunately only some sixty-odd are at present intelligible, and even of these some are only bare words which because of lack of context give but a hint of their real significance. Nevertheless enough remains to show the character and import of this first recorded attempt at culture analysis resulting in a considerable list of what are now generally termed culture traits and complexes; as will be seen, these consist of various institutions, priestly offices, ritualistic paraphernalia, mental and emotional attitudes, as well as sundry beliefs and dogmas. Cf. for the present SM, pp. 64-68.

sacrifices on tablets which have been unearthed over the past century and others from such proper names as "X is a shepherd," "X has a great heart," "who is like X," "the servant of X," "the man of X," "the beloved of X," "X has given me," etc., etc., in which X represents the name of a deity. Many of these deities are secondary; that is, they are the wives and children and servants of the major deities, thought up for them on the human pattern. Others are perhaps names and epithets of well known deities which we cannot at present identify. But quite a large number of deities were actually worshipped throughout the year with sacrifices, adoration, and prayer. Of all these hundreds of deities, as already stated, the four most important were the heaven-god, An, the air-god, Enlil, the water-god, Enki, and the great mother-goddess, Ninhursag. They usually head the god-lists and are often listed as a group performing significant acts together; at divine meetings and banquets they take the seats of honor.

An, the heaven-god, there is good reason to believe, was at one time conceived by the Sumerians as the supreme ruler of the pantheon, although in our available sources reaching to about 2500 B.C. it is the air-god, Enlil, who seems to have taken his place as the leader of the pantheon. The city state in which An had his main seat of worship was called Uruk or, as it is vocalized in the Bible, Erech, a city which played a preëminent political rôle in the history of Sumer and where, not long before the Second World War, a German expedition uncovered hundreds of small clay tablets inscribed with semi-pictographic signs, which date from about 3000 B.C., not long after writing was first invented. An continued to be worshipped in Sumer throughout the millennia but he lost much of his prominence. He became a rather shadowy figure in the pantheon, and he is rarely mentioned in the hymns and in the mytho-epic tales of later days; by that time most of his powers had been conferred upon the god Enlil.⁹

By far the most important deity in the Sumerian pantheon, one who played a dominant rôle throughout in rite, myth, and prayer, was the air-god, Enlil. The events leading up to his general ac-

⁹ For one such hymn, cf. e.g. Falkenstein, in Von Soden and Falkenstein's "Sumerische und Akkadische Hymnen und Gebete" (1953), pp. 102-109; for the myths and epic tales, cf. e.g. SM, pp. 82-83 and JAOS, 64, p. 15.

ceptance as a leading deity of the Sumerian pantheon are unknown. But from the earliest intelligible records, Enlil is known as "the father of the gods," "the king of heaven and earth," "the king of all the lands." Kings and rulers boast that it is Enlil who has given them the kingship of the land, who has made the land prosperous for them, who gave them all the lands to conquer by his strength. It is Enlil who pronounces the king's name and gives him his scepter, and looks upon him with favorable eye. From later myths and hymns we learn that Enlil was conceived as a most beneficent deity who was responsible for the planning and creating of most productive features of the cosmos. He was the god who "made the day come forth," who took pity on humans, who laid the plans which brought forth all seeds, plants, and trees from the earth. It was he who established plenty, abundance, and prosperity in the land, and who fashioned the pickax and the plow as the prototypes of the agricultural implements to be used by man.¹⁰

One of the most important hymns to Enlil and indeed one of the most remarkable of all Sumerian hymns is now being pieced together from a number of tablets and fragments by Thorkild Jacobsen and myself. Several years ago, while working in the Istanbul Museum of the Ancient Orient, I was fortunate enough to identify the lower half of a four-column tablet whose upper half is in our Museum in Philadelphia, and had been published many years ago by the late Stephen Langdon.¹¹ And several years ago, the joint

¹⁰ I stress the beneficent features of Enlil's character in order to correct a misconception which has found its way into practically all handbooks and encyclopedias treating Sumerian religion and culture, that Enlil was a violent and destructive storm deity whose word and deed practically always brought nothing but evil. As not infrequently happens, this misunderstanding is due largely to an archaeological accident. For it happened that among the earliest Sumerian compositions published, there were an unusually large proportion of lamentation type, in which of necessity Enlil had the unhappy duty of carrying out the destruction and misfortunes decreed by the gods for one reason or another. As a result he was stigmatized as a fierce and destructive deity by earlier scholars and he has never lived this down. Actually, when we analyze the hymns and myths, some of which have been published only in recent days, we find Enlil glorified as a most friendly fatherly deity who watches over the safety and well-being of all humans, and particularly of course over the inhabitants of Sumer. Cf. also JCS, 2, pp. 53-55.

¹¹ The Istanbul piece has now been copied by Hatice Kizilyay, one of the Turkish curators of the Tablet Collection of the Museum of the Ancient Orient, and published in vol. 16 of the "Belleten" of the Türk Tarih Kurumu, plates LXI and LXII. For further details concerning the text of this hymn, cf. *ibid.* pp. 358-359, and particularly note 12. For an additional Enlil hymn, cf. now Falkenstein, *loc. cit.*, No. 11, but not 12; cf. my review in *Bibliotheca Orientalis*, 11, pp. 170-176.

expedition to Nippur under the auspices of the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago and the University Museum excavated another tablet inscribed with the hymn. The text is still somewhat incomplete and its translation is no simple matter. Here are some of the more intelligible passages of this 170 line hymn; it begins with a paean to Enlil himself, particularly as a god who punishes the evil-doers; continues with a glorification of his great temple in Nippur known as the Ekur; and closes with a poetic summary of civilization's debt to him.

Enlil, whose command is far reaching, whose word is holy,
The lord whose pronouncement is unchangeable, who forever decrees
destinies,

Whose lifted eye scans the lands,
Whose lifted light searches the heart of all the lands,
Enlil, who sits broadly on the white dais, on the lofty dais,
Who perfects the decrees of power, lordship, and princeship,
The earth-gods bow down in fear before him,
The heaven-gods humble themselves before him. . . .

The city (Nippur), its appearance is fearsome and awesome, . . . ,
The unrighteous, evil, oppressor,
The . . . , the informer,
The arrogant, the agreement-violator —
He does not tolerate their evil in the city,
The great net . . . ,
He does not let the wicked and evil-doer escape its meshes.
Nippur — the shrine where dwells the father, the "great mountain,"
The dais of plenty, the Ekur which rises . . . ,
The high mountain, the pure place . . . ,
Its prince, the "great mountain," Father Enlil,
Has established his seat on the dais of the Ekur, lofty shrine;
The temple — its decrees like heaven cannot be overturned,
Its pure rites, like the earth, cannot be shattered,
Its decrees are like the decrees of the abyss, none can look upon them,
Its "heart" like a distant shrine, unknown like heaven's zenith . . . ,
Its words are prayers,
Its utterances are supplication. . . . ,
Its ritual is precious,
Its feasts flow with fat and milk, are rich with abundance,

Its storehouses bring happiness and rejoicing, . . . ,
 Enlil's house, it is a mountain of plenty. . . .

The Ekur, the lapis-lazuli house, the lofty dwelling place, awe-inspiring,
 Its awe and dread are next to heaven,
 Its shadow is spread over all the lands,
 Its loftiness reaches heaven's heart,
 All the lords and princes conduct thither their holy gifts, offerings,
 Utter there prayer, supplication, and petition.

Enlil, the shepherd upon whom you gaze (favorably),
 Whom you have called and made high in the land, . . . ,
 Who prostrates the foreign lands wherever he steps forth,
 Soothing libations from everywhere,
 Sacrifices from heavy booty,
 Has brought; in the storehouse,
 In the lofty courtyards he has directed his offerings;
 Enlil, the worthy shepherd, ever on the move,
 Of the leading herdsman of all who have breath (the king),
 Brought into being his princship,
 Placed the holy crown on his head

Heaven — he is its princely one; earth — he is its great one,
 The Anunnaki — he is their exalted god;
 When, in his awesomeness, he decrees the fates,
 No god dare look on him.
 Only to his exalted vizier, the chamberlain Nusku,
 The command, the word of his heart,
 Did he make known, did he inform,
 Did he commission to execute his all-embracing orders,
 Did he entrust all the holy laws, all the holy decrees.

Without Enlil, the great mountain,
 No cities would be built, no settlements founded,
 No stalls would be built, no sheepfolds established,
 No king would be raised, no high priest born,
 No *mah*-priest, no high-priestess would be chosen by sheep-omen,
 Workers would have neither controller nor supervisor, . . . ,
 The rivers — their flood-waters would not bring overflow,
 The fish of the sea would lay no eggs in the canebrake,
 The birds of heaven would not build nests on the wide earth,

In heaven the drifting clouds would not yield their moisture,
Plants and herbs, the glory of the plain, would fail to grow,
In field and meadow the rich grain would fail to flower,
The trees planted in the mountain-forest would not yield their
fruit

The third of the Sumerian leading deities is Enki, the god in charge of the abyss, or as the Sumerian word for it reads, the *abzu*. Enki is the god of wisdom par excellence; it is primarily Enki who organizes the earth, in accordance with the decisions of Enlil who only makes the general plans, as it were. The actual details and execution are left primarily to Enki, the resourceful, skilful, hardy and wise.¹²

Fourth among the creating deities is the mother-goddess Nin-hursag, also known as Ninmah — “the exalted lady.” In an earlier day this goddess was even of a higher rank and her name often precedes that of Enki in the various god-lists. There is reason to believe that her name had originally been Ki “earth,” and that she was thus taken to be the consort of An “heaven,” the couple that presumably were the parents of all the gods.¹³ She was also known as Nintu, “the lady who gave birth”; all the early Sumerian rulers like to describe themselves as “nourished by the trustworthy milk of Ninhursag.” In brief, Ninhursag was conceived as the mother of all living things, the mother-goddess par excellence.¹⁴

Turning from theology to ethics, it will not be surprising to find that, as in the case of philosophy, the Sumerian thinkers and sages evolved no explicit system of moral laws and principles, and produced no formal treatise on ethics. What is known about Sumerian ethics and morals must be ferreted out of the extant Sumerian writings, primarily hymns in this case, rather than myths, and such varied documents as votive inscriptions and law-codes. From all these we learn that the Sumerian thinkers, in line with their world-

¹² For additional details, cf. JCS, 2, p. 43, note 6, p. 47, note 16, and pp. 55-56. For the myths involving Enki, cf. SM passim, and especially “Enki and Sumer” (better “Enki and the World Order”), *ibid.*, pp. 59-63. For an Enki hymn, cf. now Falkenstein, *loc. cit.*, No. 22.

¹³ Cf. especially JCS, 2, pp. 47-48, note 16.

¹⁴ For two myths in which Ninhursag plays a dominant rôle, cf. “Enki and Nin-hursag: A Sumerian ‘Paradise’ myth” in Supplementary Studies No. 1 of the Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research, and “Creation of Man” in SM, pp. 68-72.

view, had no exaggerated confidence in man and his destiny. They were firmly convinced that man was fashioned of clay and created for one purpose only: to serve the gods by supplying them with food, drink and shelter, so that they might have full leisure for their divine activities. His life was beset with uncertainty and haunted by insecurity, since he did not know beforehand the destiny decreed for him by the unpredictable gods. When he dies, his emasculated spirit descends to the dark, dreary nether-world where life is but a dismal and wretched reflection of its earthly counterpart.

One fundamental moral problem, a high favorite with Western philosophers, never troubled the Sumerian thinkers at all, namely the delicate and rather slippery problem of free will. Convinced beyond all need for argument that man was created by the gods solely for their benefit and leisure, they accepted their dependent status just as they accepted the divine decision that death is man's lot and that only the gods are immortal. All credit for the high moral qualities and ethical virtues which the Sumerians had no doubt evolved gradually and painfully over the centuries from their social and cultural experiences, was attributed to the gods; it was the gods who planned it that way, and man was only following divine orders.

The Sumerians, according to their own records, cherished goodness and truth, law and order, justice and freedom, righteousness and straightforwardness, mercy and compassion, and naturally abhorred their opposites: evil and falsehood, lawlessness and disorder, injustice and oppression, sinfulness and perversity, cruelty and pitilessness. Kings and rulers in particular boast constantly of the fact that they have established law and order in the land, protected the weak from the strong, the poor from the rich, and wiped out evil and violence. In one unique and precious document, the Lagashite ruler, Urukagina, who lived before 2300 B.C., proudly records that he restored justice and freedom to the long-suffering citizens, did away with ubiquitous and oppressive officials, put a stop to injustice and exploitation, protected the widow and the orphan.¹⁵ Less than four centuries later, Ur-Nammu, the

¹⁵ Cf. now my "Sumerian Historiography" in *Israel Exploration Journal*, 3, pp. 227 ff.

founder of the Third Dynasty of Ur, promulgated his law-code which lists in its prologue some of his ethical achievements: he did away with a number of prevalent bureaucratic abuses, regulated weights and measures to insure honesty in the market place, saw to it that the widow, the orphan, and the poor were protected from ill-treatment and abuse.¹⁶ Some two centuries later Lipit-Ishtar of Isin promulgated a new law-code in which he boasts that he was especially selected by the great gods An and Enlil for "the princship of the land in order to establish justice in the lands, to banish complaints, to turn back enmity and rebellion by force of arms, and to bring well-being to the Sumerians and Akkadians."¹⁷ The hymns of quite a number of Sumerian rulers abound in similar claims of high ethical and moral conduct.¹⁸

The gods too according to the Sumerian sages preferred, of course, the ethical and moral to the unethical and immoral, and practically all the major deities of the Sumerian pantheon are extolled in their hymns as lovers of the good and the just, of truth and righteousness. Indeed, there were several deities who had the supervision of the moral order as their main function; the sun-god Utu, for example.¹⁹ Another deity, a Lagashite goddess by the name of Nanshe, had also been sporadically mentioned in the texts as particularly devoted to truth, justice and mercy. But it is only now that we are beginning to get some adequate idea of the significant rôle played by this goddess in the sphere of man's ethical and moral conduct. At this moment a Sumerian hymn,²⁰ consisting of approximately 250 lines, is being pieced together by Jacobsen and myself from 19 tablets and fragments excavated in Nippur; it includes some of the most explicit and detailed ethical and moral statements as yet found formulated in the Sumerian documents. Thus the goddess is described as:

¹⁶ Cf. "Ur-Nammu Law Code" in *Orientalia*, NS 23, pp. 40-51.

¹⁷ Cf. now *Ancient Near Eastern Texts* (edited by James B. Pritchard), pp. 159-161.

¹⁸ Cf., for the present, Falkenstein, loc. cit., Nos. 16-28.

¹⁹ Cf. in particular the hymn published by Henri de Genouillac in *Textes Religieux Sumériens*, No. 79 (from the Kassite or even Neo-Babylonian, not "Isin" period), and Lutz, *Selected Sumerian and Babylonian Texts* (PBS I, part 2), No. 118 (obv. and rev. to be interchanged), and several unpublished duplicates in the University Museum.

²⁰ Cf., for the present, *University Museum Bulletin*, Vol. 16, No. 2, pp. 30-34.

Who knows the orphan, who knows the widow,
 Knows the oppression of man over man, is the orphan's mother,
 Nanshe, who cares for the widow,
 Who seeks out (?) justice (?) for the poorest (?).
 The queen brings the refugee to her lap,
 Finds shelter for the weak.

In a passage the meaning of which is still largely obscure, she is pictured as judging mankind on New Year's day; by her side are Nidaba, the goddess of writing and accounts, and Nidaba's husband Haia, as well as numerous witnesses. The evil human types who suffer her displeasure are:

(People) who walking in transgression (?) reached out with high hand . . . ,
 Who transgress the established norms, violate contracts,
 Who looked with favor on the places of evil, . . . ,
 Who substituted (?) a small weight for a large weight,
 Who substituted (?) a small measure for a large measure, . . . ,
 Who having eaten (something not belonging to him) did not say
 "I have eaten it,"
 Who having drunk, did not say "I have drunk it," . . . ,
 Who said "I would eat that which is forbidden,"
 Who said "I would drink that which is forbidden."

Nanshe's social conscience is further revealed in lines which read:

To comfort the orphan, to make disappear the widow,
 To set up a place of destruction for the mighty,
 To turn (?) over (?) the mighty to the weak, . . . ,
 Nanshe searches the heart of the people.

Unfortunately, although the leading deities were assumed to be ethical and moral in their conduct, the fact remained that in accordance with the world-view of the Sumerians, these were the very gods who, in the process of establishing civilization, had also planned evil and falsehood, violence and oppression, in short, all the immoral and unethical mode of human conduct. Thus, for example, among the list of *me's*, the rules and regulations devised by the gods to make the cosmos run smoothly and effectively, there are not only those which regulate "truth," "peace," "goodness," "justice," etc., but also those which govern "falsehood,"

“strife,” “lamentation,” “fear,” etc. But then why did the gods find it necessary to plan and create sin and evil, suffering and misfortune altogether — so much so that one Sumerian pessimist could say: “Never has a sinless child been born to his mother”? To judge from our available material, the Sumerian sages, if they asked the question at all, were prepared to admit their ignorance in this respect: the will of the gods and their motives were at times inscrutable. The proper course for a Sumerian “Job” to pursue was not to argue and complain in the face of seemingly unjustifiable misfortune, but to plead and wail, and lament and confess his inevitable sins and failings.

But will the gods give heed to him, a lone and not very effective mortal even if he prostrates and humbles himself in heartfelt prayer? Probably not, it seemed to the Sumerian teachers — as they saw it, gods were like the mortal rulers the world over, and no doubt had more important things to attend to; and so, as in the case of kings, and kings of kings, man must have an intermediary to intercede on his behalf, one whom the gods would be willing to hear and favor. As a result the Sumerian thinkers contrived the notion of a personal god, a kind of good angel to each particular individual and family-head, his divine father who had begot him, as it were. It is to *him*, to his personal deity, that the individual sufferer bared his heart, wept bitter tears, and made his prayers. Just how this personal god was selected by a particular individual is uncertain, but we actually have the names of the personal gods of a number of Sumerian rulers from the second half of the third millennium B.C. Moreover, only recently, a Sumerian poetic essay²¹ has been pieced together from five Nippur tablets and fragments which deals to some extent with the problem of human suffering, and which reveals the all important rôle played by the personal god in the life of the individual. The tablets, to judge from their script and other criteria, were actually inscribed, roughly speaking, about 1700 B.C., but the date of the original composition of the essay may have been considerably earlier, perhaps as early as the Third Dynasty of Ur, about 2000 B.C.

²¹ Cf. “‘Man and His God’: A Sumerian Variation on the ‘Job’ Motif” in *Vetus Testamentum*, Supplements, Vol. III (“Festschrift” dedicated to H. H. Rowley), pp. 170-182.

The main thesis of our poet is that in cases of suffering and adversity, no matter how seemingly unjustified, the victim has but one valid and effective recourse, and that is to continually glorify his god and keep wailing and lamenting before him until he turns a favorable ear to his prayers. To prove his point our author does not resort to philosophical speculation and theological argumentation. Instead, with characteristic Sumerian practicality, he cites a case: Here is a man, unnamed to be sure, who had been wealthy, wise and righteous, or at least seemingly so, and blest with both friends and kin. One day sickness and suffering overwhelmed him. Did he defy the divine order and blaspheme? Not at all! He came humbly before his god with tears and lamentation, and poured out his heart in prayer and supplication. As a result his god was highly pleased and moved to compassion; he gave heed to his prayer, delivered him from his misfortunes, and turned his suffering to joy.

Structurally speaking, the poem seems to consist of four sections. First comes a brief introductory exhortation that man should praise and exalt his god and soothe him with lamentations. The poet then introduces the unnamed individual who, upon being smitten with sickness and misfortune, addresses his god with tears and prayers. There follows the sufferer's petition which constitutes the major part of the poem. It begins with a description of the ill-treatment accorded him by his fellow men — friend and foe alike; continues with a lament against his bitter fate, including a rhetorical request to his kin and to the professional singers to do likewise; and concludes with a confession of guilt and a direct plea for relief and deliverance. Finally comes the "happy ending," in which the poet informs us that the man's prayer did not go unheeded, and that his god accepted the entreaties and delivered him from his afflictions. All of this leads of course to a further glorification of his god.

To illustrate the mood and temper of the poem, here is a tentative translation of its more intelligible passages. Part of the sufferer's petition runs as follows:

"I am a man, a discerning one, (yet) who respects (?) me prospers (?)
not,
My righteous word has been turned into a lie,

The man of deceit has covered me (with) the Southwind, I (am forced to) serve him,
Who respects (?) me not has shamed me before you.

You have doled out to me suffering ever anew,
I entered the house, heavy is the spirit,
I, the man, went out to the street, oppressed is the heart,
With me, the valiant (?), my righteous shepherd has become angry,
has looked upon me inimically,
My herdsman has sought out evil forces against me who am not (his) enemy,
My companion says not a true word to me,
My friend gives the lie to my righteous word.

The man of deceit has conspired (?) against me,
(And) you, my god, do not thwart him,
You carry off my . . . ,
The wicked has conspired (?) against me,
Angered you, stormed about, planned evil.

I, the wise, why am I bound to the ignorant youths?
I, the discerning, why am I counted among the ignorant?
Food is all about, (yet) my food is hunger,
On the day shares were allotted to all, my allotted share was suffering.

My god, [I would stand] before you,
Would speak to you, ... , my word is a groan,
I would tell you about it, would bemoan the bitterness of my path,
[Would bewail] the confusion of

Lo, let not my mother who bore me cease my lament before you,
Let not my sister [utter] the happy song and chant,
Let her utter tearfully my misfortunes before you,
Let my wife voice mournfully (?) my suffering,
Let the expert singer bemoan my bitter fate.

My god, the day shines bright over the land, for me the day is black,
The bright day, the good day has . . like the . . ,
Tears, lament, anguish, and depression are lodged within me,
Suffering overwhelms me like one chosen for (nothing but) tears,
(Evil) fate [holds] me in its hand, carries off my breath of life,
Malignant sickness bath(es) my body, ...

My god, you who are my father who begot me, [lift up (?)] my face,
 Like (?) an innocent cow, in pity (?) . . . the groan,
 How long will you neglect me, leave me unprotected?
 Like an ox, . . . ,
 (How long) will you leave me unguided?

They say — the valiant sages — a word righteous and straightforward:
 ‘Never has a sinless child been born to its mother,
 . . . a sinless youth has not existed from of old.’

So much for the man’s prayer and supplication; the “happy ending” follows and reads:

The man — his god harkened to his bitter tears and weeping,
 The young man — his lamentation and wailing soothed the heart of
 his god.
 The righteous words, the pure words uttered by him, his god accepted.
 The words which the man prayerfully confessed,
 Pleased (?) the . . . , the flesh (?) of his god, (and) his god withdrew
 his hand from the evil word,
 . . which oppresses the heart, . . . he embraces,
 The encompassing sickness-demon, which had spread wide its wings,
 he swept away,
 The [disease] which had smitten him like a . . . , he dissipated,
 The evil fate which had been decreed for him in accordance (?) with
 his sentence (?), he turned aside (?),
 He turned the man’s (?) suffering into joy,
 Set by him the . . kindly . . spirit as a watch and guardian,
 Gave him . . the genii of friendly mien.

DIVINE DISGUISINGS

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WHEN recently going through the second edition of Nilsson's *Geschichte der griechischen Religion*, Volume I, I came across a passing remark which seems to me to raise an interesting question not merely of Homeric criticism but concerning the attitude of the Greeks, at the time when their classical tradition regarding the gods was in process of formation, towards the question of the shapes assumed by those gods when they partly reveal themselves to mankind. Nilsson is speaking of Odysseus when disguised as a beggar, and says (ed. 2, p. 370, taken over unaltered from ed. 1, p. 346),

Kirke verwandelt Menschen in Bestien, und Athena den Odysseus in einen alten, armen Mann. Jenes ist echte Volkssage, dieses in Anlehnung daran geschaffen; denn in der älteren Form des Gedichts war Odysseus nicht verwandelt, nur verkleidet. So ist er noch bei der Fusswaschung, und der Freiermord und der Kampf mit Iros¹ (σ 67 ff.) fordern dasselbe.

I pass over the assumption of an earlier Odyssey, in which I most potently disbelieve, and very much doubt if the change in the outward appearance of Odysseus is further from genuine folktale than the metamorphosis of his men into swine by Kirke. Shape-changing is part of the pre-literary inheritance of many peoples and occurs in forms as numerous as the shapes themselves. One has but to consult Stith Thompson's *Motif-Index of Folk-Literature*,² D 10 ff., to find examples, a few of them Greek, of people who by magic assume another sex, another social class, a different race, the likeness of another person, a different age, different size, color and so on. To be turned into a beast is but one of the many things which may happen to a man in fairy-land

¹ Misprinted Iris in both edd., one of the few slips of pen or press in this admirable work.

² Vol. II (FF Communications 107, Helsinki 1933), p. 8 ff.

or when a witch or a supernatural being plays a part. Ancient art, paradoxically enough, has its own shorthand for indicating complete changes; it shows them incomplete, as when Aktaion is represented with the antlers or the head of a stag on an otherwise fully human body, or Dionysos is seen caressing the human shoulders of Ampelos, who has changed into a vine from about the knees down.³ Otherwise the artists would be hard put to it to make it clear that the hounds are not pulling down a real stag, or that the god is not absent-mindedly fondling the plant with which he is chiefly associated. It is more to the point to consider just how much change Athene makes in the hero's appearance and how much re-alteration he undergoes when his true personality is revealed. It is well to remember what he really looks like. He is probably about 45 years old, or not much more; when he left for Troy, he was a young married man with an infant son, and before wooing Penelope had been a competitor for the hand of Helen, and author of the suggestion that all her suitors should swear to respect and if necessary vindicate her choice of a husband.⁴ An age of something like 25 years must be assumed to give him time to accomplish all this, but not much more need be supposed. Add the twenty years, or rather nineteen and a fraction, of his absence and we arrive at lusty and vigorous early middle age; Homeric heroes, whether their originals were northern Europeans or not, do not grow old quickly, and to judge by Penelope, their women remain attractive when long past their first youth. He is not very tall, but remarkably sturdy and broad-built.⁵ When Athene wants to make him particularly attractive to strangers or friends, she emphasizes his breadth but gives him greater height to match it.⁶ When, on the contrary, she wants to give him a helpless appearance, the shape of a wretched wandering beggar, she does not alter his height or breadth, but wrinkles his skin, makes his hair and teeth fall out, and gives his eyes a bleared look.⁷ She does not alter anything below the

³ See, e.g., S. Reinach, *Répertoire de peintures grecques et romaines*, p. 52; Roscher, *Lexikon*, art. AMPELOS.

⁴ Departure for Troy, Rose, *Handbook of Greek Mythology*, p. 251, n. 35; wooing of Helen, Hesiod, fgt. 94, 21 Rzach., cf. Rose, *op. cit.*, p. 249, n. 7.

⁵ Γ 193-94.

⁶ ζ 230, ψ 157.

⁷ ν 430-33, cf. π 173-75, where the reverse change takes place.

surface, apparently, for when he strips, the great muscles of shoulder and thigh are visible, Athene doing no more than to fill out the limbs, i.e., take away the scrawny look of old age.⁸ Even the skin is not so far altered that the old scar is not visible;⁹ in fact, the goddess makes the hero look as he really will look in another 20 or 25 years, by mere natural change. The rest of the disguise is indeed a simple change of clothes, his decent garments becoming rags. Hence it is that when those who know him well look closely at him, Penelope thinks at first that he has a certain resemblance to her husband, and later that it is indeed he, though this seems too good to be true,¹⁰ while old Eurykleia at once recognizes him by the scar on his thigh.¹¹ In all this I see no traces of an alteration by any re-fashioner of the poem from mere dressing up to magical bodily changes. What I do think I see is a treatment of Odysseus' outward form much like the treatment the gods give their own bodies when they wish to appear to mankind, but not in all their unbearable splendor or not too obviously as gods. It is with the gods' disguises of themselves that I am chiefly concerned, Odysseus and his shape-changing being merely incidental and not affecting the main argument. I would enquire what gods thus disguise themselves and how good the disguise is represented as being in the influential Epic tradition.

The first question is soon answered; it is regularly the greater deities who appear in disguise. The *plebs superum* is much less terrible, and its members consort fairly often with mortals in their proper shapes, notably the nymphs, who often have mortal lovers, witness for one example out of very many the parentage of Dresos and Opheltios, who are the fruit of an encounter, apparently quite casual, between their father and a Naiad while the former was pasturing sheep on the hillside.¹² There is nothing very remarkable about the twins, who are killed out of hand by Meriones. It would seem that minor deities such as their mother are not very impressive to anyone; they are the friendly supernatural population of the countryside, whose little shrines one

⁸ σ 67-70.

⁹ τ 390 ff.

¹⁰ τ 358-60; ψ 93-95.

¹¹ See n. 9.

¹² Ζ 20 ff.

might meet anywhere and whose favor was no doubt sought assiduously for the small needs of peasants. Naturally, it was well to avoid offending them, as is apparent, for instance, from the stories of Daphnis and Rhoikos,¹³ but terrible and wide-reaching vengeance was not to be dreaded from such local and petty possessors of *mana*, who were not even of necessity immortal. As to the male rangers of the wilds, the Satyrs and Seilenoi, they were certainly mischievous and the former at least a danger to lone women, but again they inspired no great fear (unlike Pan, or the Panes, who could cause the terror named after them) and if we may trust the folktale which apparently lies behind a well-known Aesopic fable,¹⁴ a man might on occasion form friendly associations with them. A river-god again, though he could be formidable, was on occasion the object of a woman's love, and Poseidon got possession of Tyro by pretending to be the deity of the stream Enipeus.¹⁵ But again and again the great gods show themselves, if at all, by glimpses, as when Achilles, looking over his shoulder, sees the terrible eyes of Athene and hears her voice (we are not told that he saw her entire form even for a moment, but he knew who it was, being half-divine himself).¹⁶ What happened if they displayed their full majesty we may guess from the fate of Semele; their usual method is either to remain invisible or to take some familiar shape, as when Poseidon appears under the well-known features of Kalchas the diviner.¹⁷ The question which arises is, to what extent such a disguise is impenetrable to a close inspection, or in other words, whether the imagination of the people at large, or of the nobles to whom Homer and the other epic poets recited or sang their poems, or of the poets themselves, assimilated such disguises to magical metamorphoses or to merely human attempts, surely not very elaborate at that date, at concealing one's real identity.¹⁸

¹³ Rose, *op. cit.*, pp. 169, 340.

¹⁴ No. 35 Perry, 60 Chambry.

¹⁵ λ 235 ff.

¹⁶ A 199-200.

¹⁷ N 45.

¹⁸ There are two outstanding cases of human disguising in the Homeric poems. The more elaborate is the entry of Odysseus into Troy in the guise of a deserter from the Achaeans, δ 244 ff., when he deceived everyone but Helen, the only person

There are of course a number of cases in which the god's disguise is not penetrated by anyone, but either known only to the Muse-inspired poet or revealed by the deity in his own good time. Of the former kind are, for example, the appearance of Athene at the side of Odysseus under the form of a herald,¹⁹ when, it would seem, no one has any suspicion that it is not a real herald bidding the crowd be silent and hear what Odysseus has to say, or again when Iris takes the shape of Laodike to summon Helen to the wall.²⁰ Of the latter, we may remember how Hermes guided Priam to Achilles' quarters in the form of a young Myrmidon and when they arrived at their goal, told the old king who he was,²¹ or Poseidon's revelation of his real personality to Tyro after passing himself off to her as Enipeus the river-god.²² Neither of these classes of disguisings is to the point here, since any disguise, good or bad, might on occasion succeed. It is more instructive to look at those passages in which a deity is recognized for what he or she is despite the change of outward form.

One of the best examples is that already mentioned above, Poseidon disguised as Kalchas (see n. 17). At first, apparently, everyone takes him to be what he seems, including the two Aiantes, whom he addresses. He then begins to behave in a way hardly appropriate to the old prophet, for he strikes both of them with his staff (N 59 ff.), and then hurries away. The lesser Aias feels an unusual effect from the blow of the staff; his readiness to fight is suddenly increased. Furthermore, he observes Poseidon as he makes off, and decides that there is something divine in the "tracks of his feet and legs," as seen from behind (N 71-72), one of several indications that the disguise is most effective from in front. Aias indeed goes so far as to say that gods are easy to recognize, ἀρίγνωτοι, in other words they cannot disguise themselves so completely as not to be detected if one is

who was well acquainted with his face, by dressing in rags and marking himself with weals. The simpler is in K 334, where Dolon puts on a wolfskin, for a reason perceived by the author of the Rhesus (208 ff.), though not by all commentators on Homer; he means to approach the Achaian lines on all fours and pass for a prowling beast.

¹⁹ B 280 ff.

²⁰ Γ 122 ff.

²¹ Ω 347 ff., 460-61.

²² λ 252.

careful to look closely. This seems to be true, at least if the mortal observer is of good family and therefore himself akin to the great deities, for few, if any, princely houses were without a claim to a divine ancestor. An outstanding example is the quickness with which Helen recognizes Aphrodite,²³ her own half-sister and the pitiless mistress of her conduct. The goddess takes the shape of an old servant of Helen's, but it would seem that the likeness extends hardly further than the face, for Helen at once sees her "skin exceeding fair and her lovely bosom and sparkling eyes." It seems as if Aphrodite cares little whether Helen recognizes her or not; the servile disguise is assumed rather for the benefit of Paris, who may if he likes flatter himself that Helen accepts his advances because of his personal charm and persuasive words, and at any rate pays little or no attention to the serving-woman who places a chair for his wife. He is never close enough to her to see the skin under her loose clothing, and no doubt her eyes are modestly downcast before her supposed master and mistress. A like casualness in approaching a specially favored mortal is shown by Athene in dealing with Odysseus. In ν 222, she comes to him in the shape of a herd-boy and for a while he is deceived and concocts one of his improvised autobiographies. She still does not assume her full deity before him, but suddenly changes into a tall and beautiful woman and tells him who she is. His answer makes it plain that this is not really necessary for him to recognize his divine helper; he had already guessed (ν 322) that the girl with the water-pitcher who had shown him the way to king Alkinoos' palace (η 19 ff.) was the goddess and no other. So it is again in the middle of the fight with the Suitors, χ 210, where he has politely pretended to be deceived by her disguise as Mentor and has addressed her by that name, but guesses who it is that has intervened. The suitors are completely taken in and one of them loudly threatens the supposed Mentor and exults at "his" departure, not noticing that the swallow on the rafters is the goddess in the familiar bird-form in which deities on occasion manifest themselves from Minoan times on.²⁴ Twice at least in the *Iliad* a hero penetrates a divine

²³ Γ 386 ff.

²⁴ χ 212 ff., 239 ff.

disguise more or less completely by simply using his wits. When Aineias is exhorted to greater efforts by Apollo in the shape of an old herald, he does not indeed see which god it is, but guesses that it must be "some one of the gods," from what he says. A mere mortal servitor of Priam would have no first-hand knowledge of what Zeus intends, as this apparition has.²⁵ Moreover, it would seem that there is a majesty in the "herald's" face which betrays his real nature.²⁶ Achilles has a somewhat easier task when Skamandros appears to him in human shape, Φ 213 ff., for a real man would hardly address him "from the depths of a whirlpool" (*βαθέης δ' ἐκ φθέγξατο δίνης*). Diomedes in E 604 has the easiest task of all in recognizing Ares, for Athene had already (E 127-28) removed the mist which hampers our mortal sight and usually prevents us from knowing a disguised or invisible deity.

I need say nothing of dreams, in which no doubt a deity can appear in any shape he or she chooses with the certainty of not being recognized by a sleeper, as in ζ 22. Nausikaa simply awakes when morning comes and remembers enough of her dream to resolve to get the family washing done that day; she neither does nor says anything to indicate that she has had a divine visitation. Nor need any time be spent on those passages in which a deity (regularly Athene) takes another shape on departing; in γ 371 she starts to walk back to the ship in the form of Mentor, and suddenly becomes a sea-bird and flies off, proof enough that she is divine, and Nestor rightly guesses that it is the patroness of Odysseus come to aid his son. Incidentally, the departure of Poseidon (above, p. 67) is not a case in point; he apparently is still in human shape when last seen, but moves away very quickly, not in the form of a hawk, but as swiftly as one.²⁷

I conclude by pointing out how firmly the Epic tradition held in much later times. Vergil, whose imitations of Homer are in the

²⁵ P 322 ff.

²⁶ P 333-34, where the words *ἐκατηβόλον Ἀπόλλωνα/ἔγνω ἐσάντα ἰδών* are not to be taken too literally; Aineias recognized that he was confronted by a god, but his own words make it clear (338) that he did not know which god.

²⁷ N 62 ff.; it is to be noted that Poseidon goes *ὥς τ' ἱρηξ*, not *εἰδόμενος ἱρηκι* or the like.

grand manner, taking what he wants and altering as he sees fit, follows him very closely in this respect. Venus appears to Aeneas and Achates²⁸ in the shape of a Tyrian huntress, and as long as she stands facing the two and talking to them, even her son does not see who she is, though he says, perhaps sincerely, that she must be a goddess and will not, apparently, accept her assurance that she is no such thing.²⁹ But once she begins to turn from them and go, her disguise falls off, as it were; like Homer's Poseidon, she betrays herself by her gait, like Aphrodite in the presence of Helen she reveals the complexion of a goddess, and, a new touch, she smells like one and is robed after their stately fashion:

rosea ceruice refulsit,
ambrosiaequae comae diuinum uertice odorem
spirauere, pedes uestis defluxit ad imos,
et uera incessu patuit dea.

It is again the manner of walking and the look in the eyes which show old Pyrgo that the supposed Beroe is something more than mortal (once more, she does not know which deity has advised them to burn the ships):

diuini signa decoris
ardentisque notate oculos; qui spiritus illi,
quis uoltus uocisque sonus uel gressus eunti.
(Aen. V, 647-49)

And again, quite after the Homeric fashion, when a deity appears to a sleeper in human form, the disguise is effective; Allecto in the shape of Calybe is taken by Turnus to be simply what she seems to be, the old priestess whom he knows and whose advice he has no intention of following when war, which (again in true Homeric fashion) is men's business, is concerned.³⁰

cura tibi diuom effigies et templa tueri;
bella uiri pacemque gerent quis bella gerenda.

²⁸ Verg., Aen., I, 314 ff.

²⁹ His *o dea certe* etc., 328 ff., may be no more than an echo of Odysseus' compliment to Nausikaa, § 150-52, but in 372 he still calls her *dea* despite her disclaimer, 335 ff.

³⁰ Aen. VII, 443-44; the second line is Hektor's rebuke to Andromache, Z 492-93, which seems to have become proverbial, cf. Ar., Lysist. 520.

But Vergil introduces a new turn, or at least not one to be paralleled from Homer; the Fury wakes him by resuming her true and horrible shape, and he starts up and goes about rousing his countrymen to resist the Trojans.

It is unnecessary to follow the tradition further; as we reach later dates, we come to times when the once great and clear-cut figures of the Olympians had faded from serious belief, their names had acquired new connotations when the pious used them, and their myths were either allegorized away or become purely literary ornaments and pieces of stock machinery. It remains only to summarize what this short analysis of Epic shows concerning the way in which those gods were once envisaged by a people who worshipped them without slavish fear but with lively belief and no small reverence. The gods do on occasion appear to mankind, perhaps did so more frequently in the days when men were greater than "mortals now are." But "it is no light thing for gods to appear in plain sight."³¹ Even Achilles, says Hera, will be frightened if a god meets him in battle,³² as he well may be, seeing that the bare hand of Apollo had been enough first to thrust Patroklos away from the walls of Troy and afterwards to disarm him,³³ unless he is forewarned of what is happening among the Olympians. Therefore if they do not come to destroy (like Apollo when he invisibly shoots his arrows of plague against the Achaian camp),³⁴ they veil their terrible splendor, though they may do so but thinly. An observant man, at all events one of high and so partly divine lineage, can sometimes penetrate the disguise, at least enough to know that he is confronted with something more than a fellow-mortal; and when they depart, gods often begin to take something more like their true forms, their disguise being as a rule more effective from in front than from behind. Here we may perhaps cite a parallel from another ancient cult with a mythology of its own; Yahweh, knowing that Moses cannot bear the terror of his face, gives him a glimpse of his back on Mount Sinai.³⁵

³¹ Hera in Υ 131, surely a sufficient witness.

³² Ibid. 130.

³³ Π 702-04; 791 ff.

³⁴ A 44 ff.

³⁵ Exodus 33, 23.

ADDITIONAL NOTE

There is one instance in the Iliad of a divine disguise which is perfectly effective from behind. In Φ 599-X 20 Apollo deceives Achilles by taking the form of Antenor and running away, and Achilles follows him for some time without realizing that he is being misled till the god, apparently turning round, tells him the truth. But Homer is careful to tell us (Φ 600) that Apollo made himself like Antenor in all respects ($\pi\acute{\alpha}\nu\tau\alpha$).

NOTES ON THE CORPUS HERMETICUM ¹

VI.4 (p. 74.18 ff.).² The discussion of 'the Good' completed, the concept of 'the Beautiful' was introduced, of which (so one may, by conjecture, fill in the lacuna) certain reflections, however faint, appear in this bad world, giving a hint of the perfect Beautiful which is with God. 'For' — so the preserved text continues — 'the summits of things beautiful reach up into the neighbourhood of the essence of God; maybe that they appear purer and more definite (scil. than other, inferior reflections) ³ (because) they, too,⁴ αἱ οὐσαι ἐκείνων. Which sense is hidden in the corrupt last words? How could anything like to, or at least reminding of, ideal perfection appear in this evil world? The author has given his answer in his previous discussion of the same question with reference to the Good: ⁵ μετουσία πάντων ἐστὶν τῇ ⁶ ὕλῃ δεδομένη. 'Participation' is the concept which bridges the gap between the Intelligible and the Material.⁷ We may therefore restore <μετ>ουστ<ι>α ἐκείνων.⁸

A few lines later (p. 75.3) we find the traditional Platonic contrast: 'Whatever can be seen with the eyes of the body is mere shadow and, so to speak, silhouette; but what cannot thus be seen . . .' There is a lacuna here, the original content of which it is not difficult to guess.

¹ Professor A. D. Nock has been good enough to read a draft of these notes. They owe more to him than meets the eye, because those suggestions do not here appear which his criticism has induced me to abandon.

² References to Corpus Hermeticum ed. Nock-Festugière.

³ The writer could not possibly speak (as Festugière's translation suggests) thus tentatively of the superiority of the transcendental over the material world.

⁴ 'These' manifestations join themselves to those of 'the Good': this interpretation justifies the accentuation καὶ αὗται of the MSS.

⁵ VI.2, p. 73.12; cf. X.2, p. 4.2.

⁶ Thus Didymus. The MSS. of C.H. insert the praeposition ἐν, by which Byzantine schoolmasters liked to stress the dative case, here as in VI.1, p. 72.10.

⁷ This traditional concept is actually incompatible with the strict dualism which the writer professes; yet it was indispensable, if the very notions of 'good' and 'beautiful' were to be accounted for. Hence the metaphysical contorsions in ch. 2-3, p. 73.10 ff., strangely culminating in the *professio fidei* p. 74.10 ff. The passage under discussion corresponds with p. 73.13: as the kosmos is, *malgré lui*, 'good' in a certain respect, thus the fact that beautiful phenomena, 'relatively pure,' appear in it is ascribed to their 'nearness' to (and hence participation in) the transcendental beauty.

⁸ Deleting αἱ which I take to be a faulty repetition of the ending of the preceding word αὗται. The proposed conjecture derives very slight support from MS. Pal. Graec. 53 reading οὐσαι. Palaeographically, <μετέχ>ουσαι would be still easier, nor would this conjecture (with Kroll's καὶ αὗται) be unsuitable, but μετουσία seems preferable for reasons of style and because of the parallel VI.2, p. 73.11.

Other scholars have sought to fill it in on similar lines as myself; the following restoration may have the merit of simplicity: τὰ δὲ μὴ ὑποπίπτοντα <οὐσία⁹ ἐστὶ καὶ ὄντως¹⁰ ὄντα,> μάλιστα δὲ κτλ.; with no lacuna after ἀγαθοῦ.¹¹

X. 1-2 (p. 113). The development of the standard contrast between God and the world of being on the one hand and the world of change on the other suffers from many lacunae. The critics have well divined the general trend of the argument; I can do no more than add a few suggestions of words. In line 6 we are told that the word φύσις cannot properly be used with reference to God; it is the term ἐνέργεια which applies to him: ¹² ἡ μὲν γὰρ φύσις μειώσ(εως)¹³ καὶ αὐξήσεως ἐστὶ προσηγορία . . . κινήτα: (ἡ δὲ τοῦ θεοῦ ἐνέργεια περὶ τὰ ἀμετάβλητα)¹⁴ καὶ ἀκινήτα. After a development the details of which I cannot restore, the writer returns to the 'action' of God (l. 11): ἡ γὰρ τούτου ἐνέργεια κτλ. The reference of τούτου, owing to the intervening passage, is not clear; write τοῦ θεοῦ.¹⁵ If, so we read a few lines later,¹⁶ the kosmos¹⁷ can be at all described as 'Father' of things mundane — a title which essentially belongs to God — its action in bestowing Life and the Good is conditioned by 'the good will' (scil. of God); for in accordance with a definition given previously,¹⁸ 'nothing'¹⁹ could exist or have come into

⁹ (Οὐσία) was suggested by Tiedemann, who, however, put the lacuna after ἀγαθοῦ l. 5. At this place, Scott would insert (ἰδέα); but does the C.H. ever use this word with the specific sense of the Platonic 'doctrine of ideas'? Finally I would not, with Einarson, commend the supplement (οὐσία τοῦ θεοῦ), since the writer (p. 75.1) identifies the being of God specifically with 'the Beautiful,' while the reference in the present passage is to transcendent realities generally.

¹⁰ ὄντως is fairly frequent in the C.H.; see e.g. p. 10.17, 126.1, 202.18 and especially fragm. xxi.1 vol. III, p. 90 (two instances). Professor Nock informs me that <ἀληθῶς ὄντα> has been proposed. This amounts to almost the same but is palaeographically less easy.

¹¹ The assumption of this second lacuna does indeed admit of a more elegant reconstruction but is in itself questionable.

¹² καὶ before ἐνέργειαν is redundant: del. Further instances of spurious καὶ: C.H. xiii.1 (p. 200.12), ib. 9 (p. 204.15), ib. 17 and 20 (p. 208.1 and 20).

¹³ Scott came near to this suggestion, for which cf. p. 88.14 and 202.13.

¹⁴ Scott's supplement.

¹⁵ The corruption was caused by τούτου immediately preceding. Festugière translates 'de Dieu,' and Scott similarly. It is not difficult to see that the Greek ought to be as explicit as the translations.

¹⁶ P. 114.1.

¹⁷ I would bracket καὶ ὁ ἥλιος in line 1. The tiny fragment of the Berlin papyrus 17027, which K. Aland has rightly referred to this passage (Theol. Lit. Zeitung, 1943, 169, after Aegyptus 1942) may have contained these words; nonetheless they seem to be a gloss anticipating l. 7. The praedicate πατήρ, in the singular, cannot well refer to two different subjects; nor does l. 7 ascribe to the sun a 'fatherhood' like that of the kosmos.

¹⁸ P. 113.11.

¹⁹ 'Rien' Festugière.

being without this (will):' οὐ χωρὶς οὕτε εἶναι <τι> οὕτε γενέσθαι δυνατόν.²⁰ The added pronoun provides the required subject; without it, the meaning would be vague ('it is impossible to be &c.').

X. 12, p. 119.1. Read: Καὶ ὁ μὲν κόσμος πρῶτος²¹ · ὁ δὲ ἄνθρωπος, τὸ²² δεύτερον ζῶον μετὰ τὸν κόσμον, πρῶτον δὲ τῶν θνητῶν, τῶν μὲν ἄλλων ζῴων <θειότερον> τὸ ἔμψυχον ἔχει κτλ.

Festugière translates: 'l'homme . . . possède *en commun avec* les autres vivants le principe d'animation.' I do not think that the bare genitive τῶν . . . ζῴων can mean 'in common with the . . . animals.' Nor would the statement 'man has the soul of the other animals' — supposing this were a possible way of speaking — agree with the basic views of the writer. With him, all souls are indeed fragments of 'the one soul of the universe,'²³ but there are degrees of quality. Man's soul is the highest, at least potentially, of those on Earth.²⁴ It is true that our tract voices contradictory views on metempsychosis;²⁵ even so, this distinction remains basic.²⁶ The supplement suggested above, then, seems to be required by both grammar and content.

XIII. 1, p. 200.14. In the lacuna after παλιγγενεσίας²⁷ Reitzenstein inserted πρόπον. This word is perfectly suitable,²⁸ but its omission not easily accounted for. Professor Nock seems to have felt this. His supplement γένεσιν is palaeographically most attractive, but I doubt whether it gives the exact sense required. It is not really the 'genesis' of rebirth that Tat desires; besides, the phrase παλιγγενεσίας γένεσιν would sound

²⁰ For the spurious ἔσται in one group of MSS. see Scott's apparatus ad loc. and Nock, Pref. p. XXIX. It is a gloss (as p. 201.4), which has expelled the original γενέσθαι.

²¹ The conjecture πρῶτον (Flussas) easily suggests itself in view of the following (τὸ) δεύτερον ζῶον, but it clashes with μετὰ τὸν κόσμον; besides, the MSS.-reading is borne out by p. 118.7, which is here resumed. The difference between the genders underlines that need for a stronger punctuation after πρῶτος which Festugière's translation implies.

²² Τό hab. Stobaeus, *om.* C. H. Festugière's translation implies the retention of the article. Without it, δεύτερον ζῶον becomes the praedicate — and the structure of the sentence goes to pieces.

²³ Cf. ch. 7, p. 116.8.

²⁴ Cf. ch. 19.

²⁵ Contrast ch. 8 with 19.

²⁶ See esp. chs. 7 f., 19, 22, 24. The doctrine is traced (p. 116.7) to the Genikoi Logoi; that is, it is a basic tenet of the sect and accordingly recurs frequently; e.g. VIII.5 (p. 89.5 παρὰ τὰ ἄλλα ἐπίγεια ζῶα) and fragm. iii. 7 (vol. III, p. 18). The latter, referring likewise to the Gen. Logoi, supplies the supplement suggested above (see p. 18, l. 5 and 8).

²⁷ The accusative in M and B² is an, evidently wrong, scribe's conjecture. The pupil could not possibly ask the master to 'hand on rebirth'; least of all by 'pounding it openly (ἐκφανῶς c. Einarson) or in secret.'

²⁸ Cf. p. 201.13 and 204.21.

about as odd as its equivalent 'the birth of rebirth.' I suggest *παράδοσιν* which, before *παραδοῦναι*, was easily omitted. The last sentence of the dialogue, p. 209.16, seems to refer back to this wording.

XIII. 3, p. 201.14 ff. With an initial participle (*ὁρῶν*) joined, by *καί*, to a main verb (*ἐξελέλυθα*), the sentence does not construe.²⁹ '*Ὁρῶ τιν'*' for *ὁρῶντι*³⁰ removes this hitch by the transposition of one letter, provides the main verb which one expects at the beginning of this clause and, incidentally, gives a suitable meaning to a previously meaningless syllable. The cure, however, is still incomplete. For one thing, *ἐξελέλυθα* needs the prefix *δι-*, as Reitzenstein and Scott saw, for it is a peculiarity of this tract (quite probably drawn from the *sermo sanctus* of the sect) to use the perfect of *διεξέρχομαι*, with the accusative, as a technical term for 'leaving the body,' i.e. ecstasy.³¹ And, finally, the combination of 'I see . . .' and 'I have left the body' puts two different notions on one level while subordinating to the first of them that of an 'immaterial form'³² which in fact is bound up with the second. The two perfects *γενενημένην* and (*δι*)*ἐξελέλυθα* ought to be on a level, i.e., we ought to read (*δι*)*ἐξελέλυθ(ότ)α*. Hermes, since his rebirth, is possessed of 'the eye of the mind'; that, I suppose, is why this sentence begins with the (still somewhat puzzling) verb *ὁρῶ* (cf. p. 206.3): he is able to see what 'cannot be seen with this material body' (l. 17, cf. l. 21) *οὐδὲ τῷ πλαστῷ τοῦτω στοιχείῳ* [*δι' οὗ*] *ἔστιν ἰδεῖν*. The bracketed words are wrongly anticipated from *δι' οὗ* which follows in the MSS. (*δι' οὗ* D *sec.* Reitzenstein).³³

Ib. 4. Hermes' explanations have their effect upon the disciple. He professes (p. 202.3) his commotion and disturbance: he no longer 'sees himself.' His rebirth has begun. It is not complete until much later

²⁹ It will not, I suppose, be held that this *καί* could correspond with the one before *εἰμί*.

³⁰ This is Scott's text. He ascribes the conjecture to Flussas.

³¹ Cf. p. 202.5, 205.10. In defense of the transmitted reading, the Budé edition refers to Plotinus II.9.18. There, however (vol. I, p. 253.37 Henry-Schwyzler), I find *ἐξελεθεῖν* with the normal (Stoic, etc.) meaning of 'parting life,' as e.g. in Epictetus I.2.21 and 9.20, M. Aurelius V.29 and X.8.3 and — this is here decisive — without the accusative object which so strangely, in the C.H., makes *διεξέρχομαι* a transitive verb with the connotation 'to leave' (and not, as is normal, 'to go through'). This usage could arise, as it did, only in the perfect: 'I have gone through the body' and, consequently, 'I am out of it.' Hence also, in the present passage, the further combination with *εἰς*.

³² *Θέαν* MSS: *ιδέαν* Scott; cf. XI.16, p. 154.1.

³³ Reitzenstein may still be right in bracketing the whole phrase *τὸ πρᾶγμα . . . ἰδεῖν* as an interpolation — it may be a standing form of admonition current in the school and variously added to the texts; see 201.7, 207.9. The question is complicated by the corruption of the words immediately following, which can hardly, as yet, be said to have been healed.

when ³⁴ he sees himself and the universe 'in the mind'; here, however, the first step is achieved: he has left his body. Hermes draws this conclusion: ³⁵ εἶτα (εἶθε MSS) . . . καὶ σὺ σεαυτὸν διεξέλγλυθας. Hermes, the γενεσιουργός, cannot possibly express this fact as a wish, and an unreal one at that; to his insight, the meaning of the symptom must be unambiguous.³⁶ After what may appear as a rather baffling short digression the disciple continues in a manner which confirms this interpretation: ³⁷ he has, so he says, lost his earlier mode of perception but not yet reached the higher and true one.³⁸ He sees his master, in size and expression, as before, that is, his material and not his spiritual appearance. The first step, then, is done: riddance from the perception of the initiate's own body; but his perception of objects outside it is not as yet purified. Hence he erroneously describes as constant such features which to the eye of the mind reveal themselves as subject to constant change.³⁹

To return to what we have just styled a 'baffling digression' (p. 202. 6-8). Tat has been told that his rebirth has begun. It is not really unreasonable that thereupon he should ask: 'Who is he that brings about rebirth?' ⁴⁰ But the answer, as transmitted, is perplexing: 'The son of God, a *certain* man, through the will of God.' The definite article at the beginning contrasts absurdly with the numeral εἷς after ἀνθρωπος, which appears to stand for an indefinite article — a usage which in itself is, in this style, exceedingly improbable. Anyhow, who is 'the son of God' to be supposed to be? He who is, at the same time, 'some' or 'any' man? Moreover, what is the reference of the clause 'by the will of God?' It fits neither the question nor, as it stands, the answer.

From the context, though, the identity of the γενεσιουργός is abundantly clear: he is no other than the speaker, Hermes. The experience which he has related (p. 201. 13 ff.) just before enables him to play this part. He has himself experienced rebirth and he has stated whence

³⁴ Ch. 13, p. 206.3.

³⁵ P. 202.4.

³⁶ Grammatically too the expression of a wish by means of εἶθε followed by the perfect (or, according to Scott, the pluperfect) may be called inadmissible. The grammatical literature quoted ad loc. in the Budé edition does show that in later Greek perfect and aorist became all but synonymous; in fact, the perfect was practically dead in popular Greek at the time when our tract was written (see Chantraine's excellent Histoire du parfait Grec). This is anything but a proof that its author, who writes a fairly competent, literary Greek, could have written what the MSS. give.

³⁷ P. 202.9.

³⁸ *Lacunam post φρενῶν indicavit* Reitzenstein. By way of illustration, one might supply (τὸν δὲ τοῦ νοῦ ὀφθαλμὸν οὐκ ἔλαβον).

³⁹ P. 202 l. 11-13.

⁴⁰ Γενεσιουργὸς τῆς παλιγγενεσίας compares with γενάρχα τῆς γενεσιουργίας in 21 (p. 209.6).

it originates and what it implies (p. 201. 2 ff.): the originator is the 'will of God'; the reborn is ⁴¹ of a different kind from the former man: he is 'God, son of God.' In these terms, I submit, Hermes describes himself in the passage under discussion. The mystagogue is $\overline{\Theta\varsigma} \overline{\theta\upsilon}$ (for 'Ο τοῦ $\overline{\theta\upsilon}$) παῖς, $\overline{\alpha}\nu\overline{o}\varsigma$ (ἀναγεννηθ)εῖς θελήματι $\overline{\theta\upsilon}$.⁴² Hermes can lead the neophyte to deification, for he has himself, 'through the will of God,' undergone the same transformation. This information is indeed supplementary to that given in ch. 2 (whither Scott would transfer this passage). In the dramatic context, however, its suitable place is here, that is, after the beginning of the enlightenment has been brought about by the words of the divine teacher (p. 201. 14 ff.). The continuation (p. 202. 8), too, is appropriate. Tat grasps that the 'God, son of God,' is his master: he is understandably distressed to note that he himself perceives of him, as before, as human and not in his true, divine person (cf. p. 202. 1).

Jb. 15, p. 206.16 ff. The rebirth achieved, Tat desires to be acquainted with the hymn which, in accordance with the sacred word of Poimandres (a reference to C.H. I, 26), he was to hear the 'Powers' sing in the supramundane sphere. In this passage a dittography should be eliminated. I submit reading ἐβουλόμην, ὦ πάτερ, τὴν διὰ τοῦ ὕμνου εὐλογίαν (μαθεῖν, Scott), ἣν ἔφησ ἐπὶ τὴν ὀγδοάδα γενομένου μου ἀκοῦσαι τῶν δυνάμεων, καθὼς [ὀγδοάδα] ὁ Ποιμάνδρης ἐθέσπισε. The verb θεσπίζω may be followed by an accusative like λόγια or θεῖα ῥήματὰ or τὰ τ'ὄντα καὶ μέλλοντα. The ogdoas, however, is, stylistically and materially, out of place here. Poimandres had not 'vaticinated the ogdoad.' His sacred words culminated in the revelation that the deified soul was to hear the hymn of the 'Powers' in praise of God.⁴⁴

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⁴¹ P. 201.4 delete $\overline{\epsilon}\sigma\tau\alpha\iota$ (with Scott); cf. above note 20.

⁴² In posing the normal use of *nomina sacra* the restoration of the wording becomes trivial. The article before $\overline{\theta\upsilon}$ seems to have been interpolated, as also p. 203.18 (*om. A*) and 204.3 (*add. A*).

⁴³ The anakolouthon effected by the *nom. c. partic.* is legitimate; so is the *infin. aor. (pro fut.)* after a verb of saying implying a promise or undertaking.

⁴⁴ A discussion of the hymn of Hermes may be found in Hermes 83, 1955, 68 ff.

THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT AND THE SCHOOL OF SHAMMAI

It has been conjectured that *παρεκτὸς λόγου πορνείας* in Matthew 5:32, which reflects the view of the School of Shammai with respect to the permissibility of divorce,¹ is an addition of the editor.² It is perhaps not without significance in this connection that in the Sermon on the Mount there seems to be agreement with the view of the School of Shammai in another important respect, namely that an evil intention is tantamount to an evil act (Matthew 5:22, 28). In Mishnah, Baba Metzia 3:12, it is stated: "If one intends (יִחְשַׁב, literally, thinks) to convert a deposit to his own use, the School of Shammai says: He is liable (for its value in case it is lost or damaged). And the School of Hillel says: He is not liable until he has converted it."

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¹ See Mishnah, Gittin 9:10.

² See W. C. Allen, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel According to St. Matthew* (3rd ed., 1912), p. 52.

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